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SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
30 YEARS OF DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
ISSUE 320 JUNE 2004
$5.99US $8.99CAN
06
0 74808 01823 9
paizo publishing

DRAGON
JUNE 2004 ISSUE #320
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Dragon ® (USPS 318-790) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007, United States of America. (ISSN# 1062-2101) Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO Paizo Publishing, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007.
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SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Paizo Publishing at **subscriptions@paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060. Although we accept subscriptions to prison addresses, delivery is subject to the discretion and/or whim of prison personnel. If you have not received a magazine or premium, please consult with your Mail Room authorities. This publisher is not responsible for non-delivery.

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DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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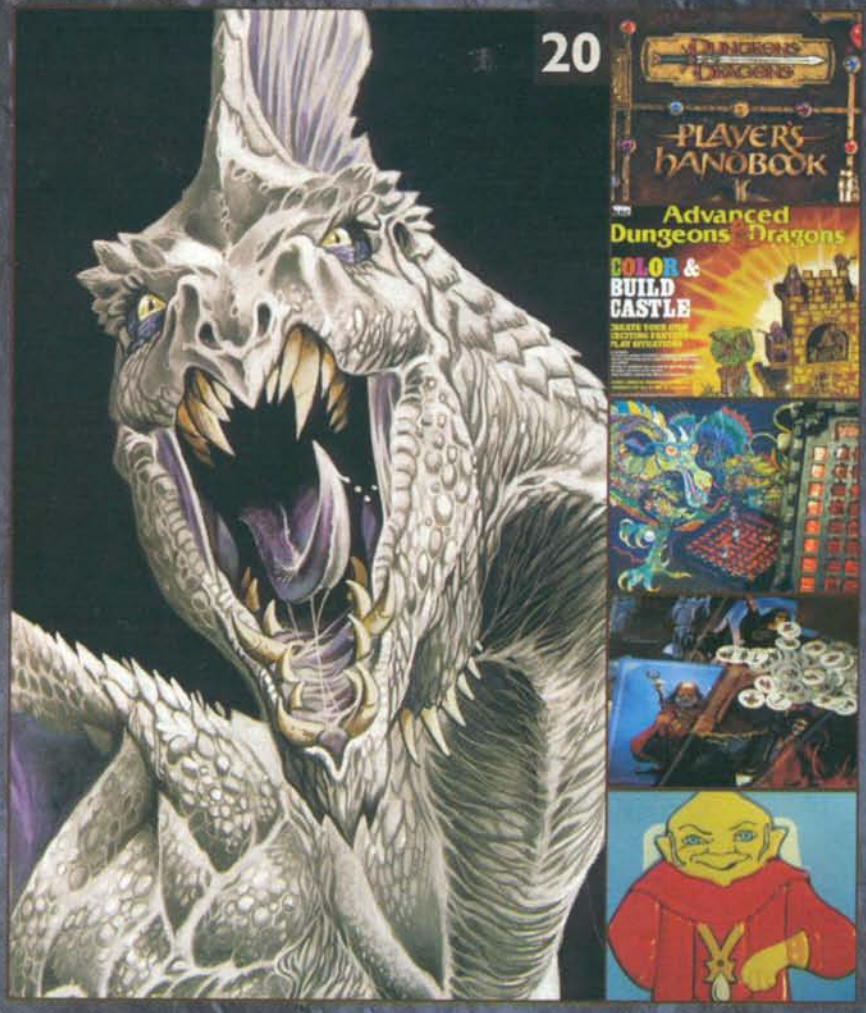

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DRAGONMARK WINDOW-CLINGS

This issue features a free set of window-clings depicting some of the dragonmarks of the EBERRON setting. You can read more about the dragonmarks and EBERRON in this issue's "Countdown to EBERRON," the final countdown article as the *EBERRON Campaign Setting* hits store shelves this month. To use the window-clings, simply cut the plastic and paper backing together and then peel the plastic free.

D&D GOES RTS

That's right: Atari is putting out a real-time-strategy D&D game. Our sources say it's based in the new EBERRON setting. Will we be fighting the Last War as though it never ended? Battling giants and savage drow on the mysterious continent of Xen'drik? Warring over control of the lightning rail?

We don't know, but given the great titles Atari has been putting out, its bound to be a better game than the last D&D-based strategy titles: *Stronghold, Fantasy Empires, Blood & Magic*, and *BIRTHRIGHT: Gorgon's Alliance*. Haven't heard of them? There's a reason, but let's not dwell on the past; let's look ahead to a glorious future . . . and Atari's press release about the RTS D&D game.

D&D DRUM AND BASS

DJ Dieselboy has released a two-CD album of drum and bass music entitled *The Dungeon Master's Guide*. If you're not in the habit of going to dance clubs, you might have heard Dieselboy's music while playing games such as *NFL Gameday 2004, Street Racer, Frequency 2*, and *Gran Turismo 4*. Dieselboy named the album as an homage to roleplaying and the first RPG book he bought. "It's a nod to my geek gaming roots," Dieselboy says. If that weren't enough, all the narration on the album is performed by none other than Peter Cullen, voice actor for Optimus Prime in the original *Transformers* cartoon series. Gotta love it.

WYRM'S **TURN**

FROM THE EDITOR
FOR LOVE OF THE GAME

I was eight years old, and Christopher Bova invited me over to his house to play. When I got there, I found Chris and another friend busily cutting squares out of cardboard boxes. I asked them what they were doing, and Chris said, "We're building a dungeon. Want to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS?" We spent the next few hours marching toys through a cardboard maze, making hero and villain alike fall prey to traps of string and toothpicks. That was my first experience with D&D, and I was hooked.

Everyone has a story about a first encounter with D&D, and the funny thing is the story is always worth telling. For those of us dedicated to this hobby, that experience is a memorable event. It has importance greater than its appearance would attest. In our minds, the first brush with D&D might be a memory more meaningful than a first kiss—and the romance probably lasted longer.

There's a good reason for that. Sure, D&D is an immersive experience, and the friends you make playing the game can last a lifetime, but D&D didn't convert you on its own. You came to the game ready to play.

For many people, Tolkien laid the foundation. For myself, it was reading *Conan*, but regardless of the means, before you learned about D&D, you loved fantasy. Something in us all liked the fairy tales with monsters the most, wanted the bedtime stories with magic repeated, or thought Halloween the best holiday. That feeling, whatever that urge is, made the discovery of D&D a homecoming.

Now, thirty years after the creation of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, the world is filled with fantasy. People today encounter fantasy more often and in more forms than could be imagined in the 70s and 80s. Movies, cartoons, TV series, toys, console and computer games—all offer up worlds of magic and monsters. More than ever, opportunities exist for people to love fantasy before they find D&D.

This could draw a large number of new players to the game and make D&D a healthy hobby for years to come, but that's not what's happening. The age of the average D&D player is closer to thirty than thirteen, and the audience is aging.

You could place the blame on console games; it's certainly easier to turn on the TV than to read 900 pages of rules. Yet that's only part of the truth. The rest is this: The definition of fantasy is changing.

The youth of today find Pokemon and Harry Potter more compelling than Conan. And although the Lord of the Rings movies will help to entrench fantasy in its sword-and-sorcery roots for a few more years, popular culture steadily pulls monsters and magic away from knights and castles toward scenes and stories with broader scope. If D&D is going to survive and thrive, it too must change. For future generations to find a home in D&D, the game must make them and their fantastic visions welcome. The EBERRON setting embraces that idea, introducing many new elements to the game. Some players scoff at trains and dinosaurs in D&D, but their inclusion opens doors to plots and characters impossible in GREYHAWK or the FORGOTTEN REALMS. This kind of change might turn off some players, but it's necessary and healthy.

Although I can't predict what they'll be, I expect the next five years to bring more changes to the D&D experience than the last thirty. As lovers of the game, we can batten the hatches against it and naysay change, or we can recognize things new to the game for what they are: insurance that this hobby always exists.

Perhaps you'll disagree with some of the changes to come, but hopefully you can recognize that the element new to the game that you hate might be the element that makes someone else's first experience with D&D an event worth talking about for years to come.

Matthew Sernett
Editor-in-Chief

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WHAT'S A SEXY DARK ELF LIKE YOU DOING IN A HIDEOUS BAR LIKE THIS ?
LEAVE... ME... ALONE!
IF I SAID YOU HAD A BEAUTIFUL ELVEN BODY, WOULD YOU HOLD IT AGAINST ME ?....
...GET IT??
LISTEN UP, HUMAN!!! I AM THE HIGH EXCRUCIATRIX OF THE DARK ELF NATION!! ONE WORD FROM ME AND YOUR PUNY TOWN WILL BE INVADED BY 10,000 DARK ELF WARRIORS... AND ENSLAVED!!!!!!!!!
SO... ARE YOUR EARS ALWAYS THAT POINTY, OR ARE YOU JUST GLAD TO SEE ME?
Ewwww !

BY TONY MOSELEY

READERS TALK BACK

MORE FUN THAN A BARREL OF PIRATES

WELCOME BACK

How does the old adage go? The more things change, the more they stay the same? Well, I have seen a profound change in gaming, and speaking purely as an RPG veteran, I don't like change. Change costs me money. D&D gives birth to AD&D, so I buy a bunch of books; AD&D second edition is unveiled, so I buy a bunch of books; third edition happens, and I buy a bunch of books; D&D 3.5 is released, revamping a system that sorely needed some dedicated attention, and now guess what: That's right, I have to go out and buy a bunch of new books.

Okay, so change doesn't suck. As much as I loved second edition, 3.5 is way better. I've been able to do things with this system that I would have never gotten away with in second edition. Okay, so I balked at the whole idea of rewriting the D&D system. Being somewhat of a traditionalist, I had this silly notion that if it wasn't broke, it didn't need fixing. Of course, what I only realized a few months ago was that there were serious problems with the system, and a rewrite was absolutely necessary. My bad.

I think the biggest problem I had with the whole idea of changing D&D was the learning curve. The way I saw it, everything I knew about D&D wasn't necessarily wrong; it was just out of date. Thus, the process of re-learning all I knew seemed daunting at best, and for several years, I abandoned the game I loved, opting to fill my gaming needs with computer and console games. Recently I met up with a few individuals who rekindled my dormant passion for D&D. Over the past months, I have been revitalized; the wonder and amusement I felt nearly twenty years ago playing D&D has returned, proving that old dogs can learn new tricks, or at least learn to appreciate change for what it is: a second chance.

Alexander Meic
Alberta, Canada

AVAST!

I have to admit that my confidence in your magazine has declined over the past year and a half. That's mostly due to the fact that I am tired of 3.5 updates, which I will not buy. I have hundreds of dollars invested in 3rd edition, which is still pretty new, and I'm tired of EBERRON. Still, I truly enjoyed issue #318 and am looking forward to #319. Why did I like #318? The dinosaurs were cool, as were the ninjas, but the best were the pirates!

Fearing that you might not continue to publish pirate material, I have taken drastic measures. I am holding all of your other readers hostage until the following demands are met:

1. More material on pirates: rules for sea battles, information on ships, information on sailing and sailing terminology, cool campaign ideas, NPCs, new monsters, prestige classes, feats, skills, spells, and so on—any and everything to do with pirate campaigns. This shall be a monthly article.

2. Give me a barrel of monkeys and a bottle of Brass Monkey. What could be more fun than that?

3. From this day forward you shall refer to me as Captain D.

4. You shall change the name of your magazine to Dragons of the Caribbean.

Once my demands have been met, I shall release my prisoners and all will be good in the world.

Mike "Captain D" Dockery
Address withheld

NOT PLAYING NICHE

Issue #318 is terrible, one of the worst issues I've seen in years, and I'll tell you why.

First off, you focused on not one, not two, but three niche fantasy topics: ninjas, pirates, and dinosaurs. Huh? Does almost every campaign have these things as common occurrences? No.

Second, you wasted ink on six pages of comics, making a point of it on your front cover. If this is what the readership wants, I'm shocked and disap-

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The Infused
by Chris Tanner
Play host to angels and team up with the divine with a new prestige class that binds your character's soul to a celestial being.

The Way of the Gun
by Michael Shortt
Blackpowder and bullets in D&D? You bet. Check out the weapons of the Renaissance and beyond.

Planar Dragons
by Edward Bonny
The Outer Planes host more dragons than those from the *Draconomicon*. Read about dragons from Mechanus and more.

Silicon Sorcery
The Temple of Elemental Evil
by Clifford Horowitz
D&D stats for all the giants—the giant gar, the giant tick, and the giant crayfish!

The Limitless Light
by Bennet Marks
Learn about the Plane of Radiance, the brilliant new plane of light opposite the Plane of Shadow.

Heroes of Fate
by Dean Poisso
Holy slayers, corsairs, mamluks, and . . . barbers? Prestige classes from the Land of Fate, Al-Qadim.

Born of Fire
by Jonathan Drain
Play a half-elemental character from 1st level with these monster classes.

Plus, "DM's Toolbox," "Faiths of Faerûn," "Dungeoncraft," "Under Command," "Elminster's Guide to the Realms," "Sage Advice," and more!

pointed. I love the caption contests' humor, but I don't see how six pages of comics is good for *Dragon*. That takes up valuable space that could be used for rich and original game analysis and ideas, or cool previews of upcoming products like the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. If your readers want comics, they should read comic books.

Please, please, please stop featuring niche topics and comics! Being less popular topics, there's no good reason to have those kinds of articles dominate a D&D-based magazine. There's a place for that material, and I do want to see it, but spread out—not taking an entire issue hostage. It's a ridiculous direction for *Dragon*, which until the train wreck that was issue #318, I thought was the official D&D magazine, not the official D&D-niche-topics-and-comics magazine.

Tony
Address withheld

ONLY A NINJA CAN KILL A NINJA

For the longest time, my friends have been joking about ninja pirates and how *Dragon* should make us some guidelines for an official one. We never had any guidelines, so I made up a ninja class that is similar to yours, but yours is much better than mine. It had the d6 hit points, but it was terrible for play. I tried a cross between a rogue and a fighter. I was disappointed when Matthew Sernett said that this issue idea was a joke. We take ninja pirates seriously. Who doesn't think they're deadly? I must say that it was surprising and funny to see an entire magazine dedicated to our three favorite things in D&D: ninjas, pirates, and dinosaurs.

I also loved the comics. "Zogonia" was truly how we play D&D here, and "Nodwick" was hilarious. I just wrote to say good work, and I'll continue to read as long as you have such great articles.

Ben Cousino
Erie, MI

WINNER OF DRAGON'S SETTING SEARCH

Ninjas, pirates, and dinosaurs. Damn it. That should have been my setting search submission: a fantasy Asia filled with warring island nations, samurai mounted on domesticated raptors, bigger dinosaurs hunted by quasi-Polynesian tribesmen, dueling factions of shadow warriors, privateers and buccaneers battling the servants of the Imperial Navy, fallen kingdoms deep in forgotten jungles.

And I call it . . .

DINOPIRATES OF NINJA ISLAND!

I think those warforged are nifty. And that picture of the vanara? Awesome. So I'm adding them both to Dinopirates of Ninja Island.

Dinosaurs. Pirates. Ninjas. Robots. Monkeys. Man, that *so* woulda won the setting search.

JPL
From the EN World message boards

SEND HIM TO DAVY JONES'S LOCKER

After reading the latest Gary Gygax column in *Dragon* #318, I'd like to seriously recommend that you guys find a graceful way to drop the column. I've been reading it since it started, and I have yet to feel like it wasn't a total waste of my time. I also have yet to come away from it with a single new idea. In my dealings with other local gamers, I have yet to hear from anybody who feels differently.

I would love to see such an editorial rotating through other more relevant game designers—not just the Ray Winninger, Monte Cook, and Robin Laws types, but also from some of the newer big names in gaming, like Ian Sturrock or non-*Dragon* regulars like John Nephew—but let's have it be good. Most of these game designers have regular columns on one website or another where they run off at the mouth about themselves. I think that for *Dragon* the columns should have a pretty trenchant point and some good insight. I really feel like if I read another page of tortured, pointless prose about the glory days of Yrag, I'm going to lose it. If anyone other than Gary Gygax wrote something of the quality of these columns and sent it into you for publication, you'd probably take the time to mock the author before rejecting it.

Just some advice from a long time reader. (I have a straight run of *Dragon* back to issue #100.) I love the magazine.

On another #318-related note, I would like to see more content about pirates. I've been waiting for *Dragon* to do a good pirate issue since it started doing focused issues of that sort. With the popularity of Green Ronin's Freeport series and other products, I think that there's a pretty sizable pirate-adventur-

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This issue's Riddle:

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Sliced methodically apart;
So those who have the time to spend
Can try to make it whole again.

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ing contingent out there. The little bit in issue #318 just whet my appetite.

Ernest Mueller
Address withheld

WELCOME ABOARD

I'm new to this DUNGEONS & DRAGONS thing. I've only been playing for about half a year, but for that half a year I've been reading *DRAGON*. I absolutely love it.

I must say though: I like the crunch parts of it better than the fluff. I don't get *DRAGON* to read about fiction, I get it so I have new things to throw at my players, stuff that I would never have thought of or am too busy to make. I don't intend offense or anything. I think your magazine is probably the best thing that has happened to my game. Thank you so much.

Michael Bessette
Alberta, Canada

WHITHER FICTION?

I have been reading Dragon for quite a while and recently got a subscription. I love the magazine and wait impatiently for the next issue to come out each month. I have one question, though. Once in a while you put a story into the magazine. I usually suck it right up and am happy but for one thing: I don't know were to find the rest of the story. Series stories, such as "Crusader Earth: The Chalice of Life," started in issues of *DRAGON* I do not have. Other stories, such as "Guinevere's Fate" (which appeared in *DRAGON* #311), appear to be one-time things. I was just wondering if you could tell me where I can find the rest of the stories.

Bryan
Bowie, Maryland

You can buy back issues at **www.paizo.com/backissues.** *In the future, our website will feature summaries of all the issues we sell as back issues. At the moment, your best bet to find fiction published in past issues might be one of the various online indexes of* DRAGON. *The Dragondex* (**www.aeolia.net/dragondex**) *even has a link that shows you just the short stories that have appeared.*

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

WINNER
"That's it, Bob! I warned you about touching another man's miniature."
Congratulations Chris Trost
Aloha, OR

RUNNER-UP
"Who says I'm a killer DM?"
Craig E. Lloyd
Riverton, UT

BY TONY MOSELEY

CUT TO THE QUICK
TWO IS TOO MANY

by Gary Gygax

Not only did the mysterious Erac's Cousin find and gain the only vorpal blade that I placed in the GREYHAWK Campaign, but he subsequently acquired, by random roll, the only other vorpal sword that came into play in that heavily played game. This was just too much for any respectable DM to allow, of course, as his character was also ambidextrous. This preyed on my mind, but I was not going to be so arbitrary as to simply put in some encounter to remove one or both of those blades. Time would provide opportunity for such redress, and that proved to be the case in a rather bizarre way.

Ernie and Mark Ratner decided to go on an adventure into Castle Greyhawk, Ernie playing the dual-classed fighter/magic-user Erac's Cousin and Mark playing his paladin, Eylerach. Rob happened to be around so the players got the "advantage" of having two helpful DMs on their adventure. The doughty explorers made their way quickly through some upper levels of the dungeons and came upon one where the main encounter was with the bas-relief head of a magically chained demon prince, Fraz-urb-luu. Upon entering the place, the demon's power was sufficient to prevent the paladin from detecting evil, so the exchange became a matter of DMs telling convincing lies on behalf of the nether lord so as to make the adventurers believe them. Rob and I were sharing a bottle of Southern Comfort—a very rare thing, imbibing when mastering a game—and evidently the drink improved our believability.

The paladin was convinced by Fraz-urb-luu's tale of being an unfortunate minion of good trapped by evil. Parenthetically, Ernie was aware of the ruse, but not wanting to metagame, he had Erac's Cousin go along with Eylerach's decision to assist the unfortunate prisoner. So off the two stalwarts went to an 8th-level dungeon maze at the center of which a werebear guarded a special scroll that would free the demon lord from his confinement. Why slaying a werebear to free a supposedly good entity didn't trigger alarms I can't say, but off that guardian they did. The pair then returned to the chamber in which Fraz-urb-luu's face alone could be seen in the stone, Eylerach read the scroll, and . . .

"Mu-hah-hah-hah! Thank you mortal fools for freeing me. I am grateful, so rather than slaying you I shall carry you back to my abode in the Abyss to serve as valued henchmen." With that, the demon lord picked up one character in each arm and gated off to the realms of chaotic evil. He was true to his word and treated both as worthy hirelings. Of course, both were disgusted with the events. Erac's Cousin's vorpal blades and Eylerach's two-handed +5 holy avenger turned to useless hunks of metal in the Abyss. Needless to say, both characters were most displeased with their habitat, the Paladin being doubly miserable there, it being the antithesis of his alignment. So both eventually managed to escape the demon lord's toils and return to the material world.

Both players were really upset with Rob and me, for at the end of the adventure, we were rollicking at their misfortune, the libations we had enjoyed in the course of the session adding to the mirthful tenor. I don't think Ernie has forgiven me for the loss of Erac's blades, and he had just cause to be upset. What confounds me, though, is why the two never sought some means of correcting their error, a means of re-imprisoning Fraz-urb-luu and reversing the effect that made Erac's vorpal blades and Eylerach's holy avenger junk. I kept encouraging them to play thus, but to no avail.

Moral: Sometimes the DM can be too clever in ridding the campaign of unwanted magic items and spoil things.

[Or: Don't drink and DM. –MS]

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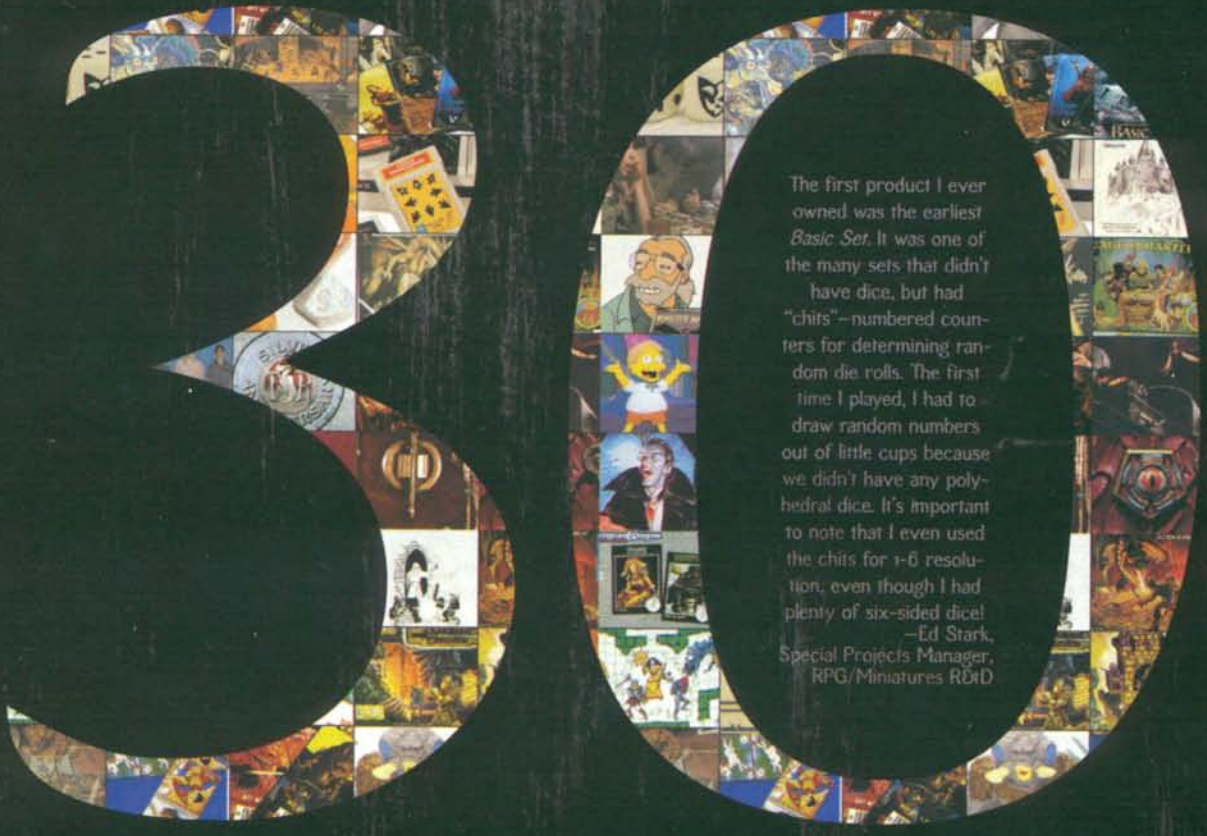
30
YEARS
OF
DUNGEONS &
DRAGONS

A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE BEST GAME IN HISTORY

30 YEARS OF D&D 1974-2004



The first product I ever owned was the earliest *Basic Set*. It was one of the many sets that didn't have dice, but had "chits"—numbered counters for determining random die rolls. The first time I played, I had to draw random numbers out of little cups because we didn't have any polyhedral dice. It's important to note that I even used the chits for 1-6 resolution, even though I had plenty of six-sided dice!

—Ed Stark,
Special Projects Manager,
RPG/Miniatures R&D

by Mat Smith · illustration by Wayne Reynolds

Thirty years ago, the first party of bold adventurers set out to explore treacherous corridors, battle deadly monsters, and discover wondrous treasures. Since then, players all over the world have congregated around kitchen tables, basements, college dorms, military bases, convention halls, and even classrooms to create their own heroic characters and delve into the never-ending realms of imagination to be found in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.

Over the years, the D&D game has grown in popularity and in scope. As the game expanded to encompass a vast array of rulebooks, supplements, adventures, and accessories, it also inspired innumerable toys, books, games, and other products.

My favorite first edition product was the DUNGEON MASTER's Guide. You could always find something new in that book (mostly because its organization was so insane).

—Rich Baker, Senior Designer, RPG R&D

This year's celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the D&D game offers a prefect opportunity to take a look back at the game's rich history, as well as many of the innovations and ideas that created the legend that has become DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

1974-1979

In January 1974, the first DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game was printed, hand-assembled, and packed in generic boxes with labels affixed to the outside. Consisting of three volumes: *Men & Magic*, *Monsters & Treasure*, and *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS first edition also included a set of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d12, and d20) which were molded from a soft plastic that chipped and wore down through use (eventually turning the 20-sider into a ball). By year's end, the entire print run of one thousand DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games sold out. In the following year, TSR Hobbies, Inc. formed and began publishing a newsletter called *THE STRATEGIC REVIEW*. *THE STRATEGIC REVIEW* ran for five issues before being replaced by *THE DRAGON* the following year. That year also saw the release of the first two supplements to the D&D game, based on the original campaign worlds of Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson: GREYHAWK and BLACKMOOR, respectively.

I love the storytelling part of the game, which is why I immediately grabbed on to the Dungeon Master role and never let it go.

—Doug Niles, author

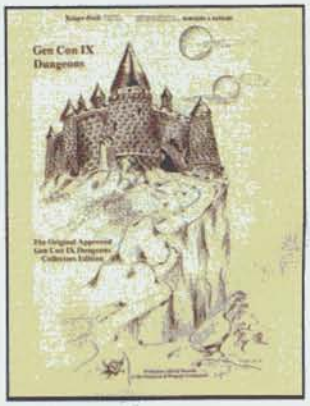
AS DUNGEONS & DRAGONS continued to grow in popularity, a younger audience became attracted to the game but had difficulty understanding the rules. This prompted the creation of an introductory-level version of the game—the first *D&D Basic Set*, published in 1977. That same year, TSR Hobbies introduced the first playing aids for the D&D game: a set of modular dungeon and cavern maps to help Dungeon Masters create their own dungeons, as well as a set of pre-generated monster encounters and treasure to help DMs fill the rooms of those dungeons. The biggest development of 1977 was the introduction of the first hardbound book ever published by a gaming company—the *Monster Manual*, which featured more than 350 monsters and introduced the world to the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.

I got started playing D&D in 1975, but not in earnest until 1978. The first D&D product I owned were the three original booklets. They were bought together at the same time, but not in the little white box I later saw them offered in. Of course, being a gamer, I bought them all over again in the boxed edition.
—Ed Greenwood, creator of the Forgotten Realms, author

In 1978, the next AD&D product was released, in the form of the game's second hardcover rulebook—the *Player's Handbook*. The first published adventures were also released that same year: the three-part Giants series (*Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*, *Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl*, and *Hall of the Fire Giant King*) and the three-part Drow series (*Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, *Shrine of the Kuo-Toa*, and *Vault of the Drow*). The next year, a tournament adventure, later released as *Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*, introduced the first use of detailed encounters, three-dimensional maps, and boxed "read-aloud" text—setting the standards for all future published adventures. Also published in 1979, the game's third hardbound book, and the most popular of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rulebooks, was released—the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*.

I started playing when I was twelve. What got me hooked right off the bat was seeing a game in progress. A player pointed to a pile of plastic monsters and said that they'd just killed them. That was the game for me. Killing monsters is still a major part of the fun. My favorite first edition product is the *Monster Manual*. Wow, an illustration for each monster! And lots of monsters! Plus archdevils, superdragons, and more!
—Jonathan Tweet, Miniatures Design Manager, RPG R&D

→ RUGGED DICE
Polyhedral dice made of high-impact plastic didn't appear until 1976. The numbers were uninked and required a gamer to color them in using a marking pen or crayon.



↑ GEN CON
TSR Hobbies hosted the GEN CON GAME FAIR (GEN CON IX) for the first time in 1976, which featured the first D&D Open tournament. Also present at that show was the new miniatures company, Ral Partha Enterprises (which later became an official licensee of AD&D miniatures) and another publishing company named Judges Guild, which was the first company licensed to publish support product for the D&D game (including the infamous *City State of the Invincible Overlord*). Over the next several years, GEN CON would grow in popularity and attendance, prompting it to relocate twice—from Lake Geneva's Horticultural Hall to the Playboy Resort Convention Center (just outside of town) and then to the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Parkside in 1978.

MY THIRTY YEARS WITH D&D

One of the first questions that I am asked is whether or not I thought that D&D would be so popular. The short answer is: No! The somewhat longer version is as follows.

My group and I were having a wonderful time playing in Blackmoor. One fellow would call me when he got to work and want to play on the phone! We thought that Blackmoor was great, and we also thought we were crazy, but it was the fun kind of madness that spreads.

In spite of having little in the way of formal rules, two other campaigns sprang up within a few weeks. It even spawned the *Dungeon!* board game. Then we visited our pals in Lake Geneva and shared the madness. The rest, as they say, is history.

Back in the old days, we did not have the advantage of such a wealth of material in the way of information, rules, accessories, or figures. It was pretty much what we could cobble together, leaving us to fly by the seat of our pants. Nowadays, the problem is not the lack of material but which stuff to use—and believe me, that does make it a lot easier.

Memorable moments are legion. About two years after D&D was published, there was the young man who complained bitterly to me. His 65th-level balrog had no more worlds (like in planets!) to conquer. Would we please hurry up and create some more worlds for him. "Yep, I said. We will get right on it!" Any day now . . .

Then there was Bob Albrecht's class in California. His students were learning about Japanese culture so he asked me to do a samurai campaign. The trick here was that the terms used had to be in Japanese! Fortunately, I had a translator. The students were very excited about learning math and writing up their adventures (in English, not Japanese!). It was the most fun I had running a campaign in years. It also showed how educators could utilize roleplaying games to teach kids.

I have had a tremendous amount of fun being a Dungeon Master over the years. I helped various people and charities that I might never have otherwise heard of, much less assisted. That certainly gave me the warm fuzzies more times than I can count.

Oh, it is fun being named Guest of Honor and meeting other celebrities, and so on, but it is the game adventures that provide the tasty creamy center. I really enjoy participating in the ever-changing and evolving story of my own campaign, as well as those of others. Seeing the flowering of such a multitude of new games and genres that find their roots in D&D is amazing.

It is, for me, the constant learning challenges that have kept my own interest in D&D alive. After some 1,500 games, it's sometimes hard to keep things fresh. As a hint to other DMs, leave no stone unturned, no National Geographic Special unwatched, and no book unread. You never know what will inspire you.

It has been a wild and interesting ride with every indication that D&D will continue on into the far future. Just remember it is *role*playing not *roll* playing. If the rules get in the way of a story, just don't use them.

Yes there is more, much more. I guess that you will have to wait for the book! Yep . . . any decade now.

—Dave Arneson, co-creator of Dungeons & Dragons.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures
GYGAX & ARNESON
Original Collector's Edition
3-VOLUME SET
PUBLISHED BY TACTICAL STUDIES RULES

◆ TOMB OF HORRORS
Famed for its deadliness, the fabled *Tomb of Horrors* was ressurected for 2nd edition.

◆ VAULT OF THE DROW
A favorite of many players, the *Vault of the Drow* was the first adventure to feature drow as the main villains.

◆ ORIGINAL "WHITE BOX"
Released in 1978, the "collector's edition" of the three-volume set of Dungeons & Dragons rules was comprised of *Men & Magic, Monsters & Treasure, The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, plus a 19-page collection of reference sheets. It was packaged in a white cardstock box with the descriptor "Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures."

The *D&D Basic Set* was the first product I owned, but the first product I ever bought for myself was *D1: Descent into the Depths of the Earth*. I still didn't know much about D&D, so I didn't realize it was an adventure for higher-level characters. All I knew was that it was the start of a series, so I figured it would be a good adventure to buy for when I started DMing. I finally did DM it for my group, but I'd read it dozens of times beforehand because we took a long time getting to that level!

—Ed Stark, Special Projects Manager, RPG/Miniatures R&D

I started playing D&D in 1978, when I was in 6th grade. My buddies and I could tell from the rules that you were supposed to have a whole gang of characters, so one guy would DM for the other two, each of whom would make up whole 6-character parties. Then we'd all play at the same time. The other guy's party was fair game if you had a few levels on them and caught them when they were busy with a monster. (We straightened ourselves out eventually.)

—Rich Baker, Senior Designer, RPG R&D

I suppose my favorite first edition product is the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but if you don't count the core books, my favorite product is *Vault of the Drow*. I was blown away by that module because it wasn't just a linear dungeon crawl where everything was mapped out. It had different factions the PCs could interact with (in any order) and a whole evil city to explore. I think it opened my eyes about roleplaying and interacting with NPCs on a level beyond "kill 'em and take their stuff."

—Monte Cook, Game Designer, Malhavoc Press

30 YEARS OF D&D 1974-1979 30 YEARS OF D&D 1974-1979

1980-1985

The early 80s was a period of phenomenal growth for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. In order to meet increasing demand, TSR Hobbies leased a new office complex, as well as a warehouse, and also opened its own typesetting house and print shop. Additionally, the installation of a mainframe computer dramatically changed the working environment for the on-staff authors and editors. As the company switched from creating games on typewriters to writing and editing on computers, TSR was one of the world's first game publishers to become entirely computerized.

I played for the first time in 1980. A friend ran a game for me and some other friends—I thought it was fascinating! My first D&D product was a set of the funny looking dice. (My son wanted them.)

—Margaret Weis, author

In the spring of 1980, the need to organize and support the gaming community sparked the formation of the ROLE PLAYING GAMERS ASSOCIATION network, which united gamers from around the nation, promoted quality roleplaying, and helped foster a positive image of roleplaying across the United States. By the following year, the RPGA published its first 16-page newsletter—the POLYHEDRON NEWSZINE. That year also saw the publication of the game's fourth hardcover rulebook: *Deities & Demigods* (later re-titled *Legends & Lore*), which introduced a number of different mythologies and pantheons to give DMs more setting options. Also published that year was the *World of Greyhawk*, which was based on the original campaign world in which Gary Gygax tested the game's rules and became the first official campaign setting created for the AD&D game. The next year introduced to the world a new accessory that has since become a virtual necessity for running D&D games—the *Dungeon Master's Screen*.

My favorite D&D/first edition AD&D product was probably *Against the Giants (G1-2-3)*. I've played that adventure more than any other. *Unearthed Arcana* is a close second—I don't think any other game product has ever had quite the allure of that first "rules supplement."
—Andy Collins, Developer, RPG R&D

As to my own personal favorite contribution to the game, I would have to say it is the role I played in incorporating the "Attribute Check" into the official rules. This was something that I always used in my own games, and we finally worked the procedure (which lets players roll Strength checks, Intelligence checks, and so on, for their characters) into the rules starting with *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*.
—Doug Niles, author

The AD&D game quickly became a favorite among military forces, as it provided an ever-changing source of challenge and entertainment that could go with them anywhere. As military personnel played abroad, AD&D was introduced to a number of new countries, and demand for the game grew to a point at which TSR Ltd., a branch company, was formed in Cambridge, England. Worldwide popularity of ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS among youths and college-age gamers continued to grow. Soon, exclusive distributors of the AD&D game were established in twenty-two different countries. Recognizing the need for foreign translations of the game, TSR set out to create a French version of AD&D, which was completed and published in 1982, signaling the start of the translation of the AD&D game into fourteen different languages.

On September 17, 1983, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Saturday morning cartoon first aired. It featured a heroic adventuring party of youths (whose ages raged from about 10 to 17) who were magically transported from the real world into the magical realm of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. They battled orcs, bullywugs, Tiamat the five-headed dragon, and other creatures straight out of the AD&D game (along with their nemesis, Venger) in a valiant effort to return home. The show dominated its timeslot for two full seasons (twenty-seven episodes) before moving into syndication in 1985. During that two-year timespan, the cartoon spawned more than one hundred different licensed products ranging from puffy stickers and plastic puzzles to clothing, coloring books, and action figures. That same year also saw the release of the much-anticipated *Monster Manual II*.

In 1984, after two years of development by a dozen staff members, the AD&D gaming community was introduced to the exciting world of DRAGONLANCE. Centering around a series of twelve adventures that focused on the different dragons in the game, DRAGONLANCE quickly became a favorite campaign setting. The storyline behind the saga became the subject matter for a new line of fantasy novels that launched TSR into the book industry—the *DRAGONLANCE Chronicles*.

The following year, the D&D game expanded further with the introduction of the *Oriental Adventures* rulebook, which provided all the material necessary to run an AD&D game set in a medieval fantasy Asia setting. Also in 1985, the *D&D Masters Set* offered characters the rules necessary for continuing game play with characters that ranged in level from 25th all the way to 36th level. The most notable release of that year was *Unearthed Arcana*—an innovative collection of new rules and options that expanded the scope of the game and demonstrated the flexibility of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FANTASY CANDY FIGURES
Produced in 1980, an assortment of fruit-flavored candy in various monster and hero shapes were available. The boxes featured a variety of cut-out trading cards (one per box) that provided an illustration and short description, as well as statistics and special abilities for an assortment of monsters and character classes.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS BEACH TOWEL
Released in 1982, the AD&D beach towel depicted a dungeon complex drawn on a one-inch grid (making it perfect for miniatures) with three heroic characters appearing at its center ready to battle.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS COMPUTER FANTASY GAME
In 1981, Mattel created (and advertised on television) a hand-held LCD game in which a player controlled a warrior exploring a dungeon in search of a magic arrow to slay the dragon that laired somewhere inside. The dungeon also featured pits that required a grappling hook to escape and a giant bat that could snatch up the warrior to drop him in a random room.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS COMPUTER LABYRINTH GAME
In 1980, Mattel Electronics released an electronic board game that featured a collection of pewter figures, modular wall sections, and a grid of keyboard-type squares that produced various sound effects when pressed to indicate when an exploring character had encountered a wall, treasure, or other dungeon feature on the way to battle the powerful dragon living in the maze.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ACTION SCENE KITS
AD&D Action Scene Kits, released in 1980, offered fans the opportunity to assemble and paint different dioramas, complete with terrain and plastic figurines. "Dungeon Invaders" featured a section of dungeon—including doors, a portcullis, winding stone stairs, and a dragon's lair. Another set, "Orc War," provided a small keep set off by a river (complete with drawbridge) for the defenders, as well as a stone outcropping and a pair of tents.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ON INTELLIVISION
In 1982, the first Advanced Dungeons & Dragons cartridge (retitled in 1983 as *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Cloudy Mountain*) was released for the Intellivision game system. The top-down, third-person perspective game allowed up to two players to lead an expedition to reach the legendary Cloudy Mountain, where the adventuring party would battle against the deadly winged dragons and discover the Crown of Kings.

The following year, the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Treasure of Tarmin* game was released. It introduced hidden doors, magic weapons, and a versatile inventory for the first time.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ACTION FIGURES
A series of Dungeons & Dragons action figures appeared in 1983, featuring heroes and villains such as Strongheart the Good Paladin and Warduke the Evil Fighter. In 1984, a second series of figures was released that included a larger array of heroes, villains, and monsters, including a set of "bendy" monsters (such as the Carrion Crawler) and "wind-up" creatures.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS COLOR AND BUILD CASTLE
Published in 1983, the *AD&D Color & Build Castle* set featured more than eighty die-cut pieces pre-printed on "sturdy laminated fiberboard."

1986-1990

The most significant event in 1986 was the release of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, which marked the first time two hardback rulebooks were released in the same year—something that continued in following years. This was also the year that the bi-monthly magazine *Dungeon Adventures* was first published, offering gamers a steady source of high-quality, short adventures. The following year saw the release of the *Dragonlance Adventures* rulebook and the *Manual of the Planes*, which provided gamers comprehensive rules for dealing with the multiverse for the first time. The most noteworthy event of 1987, however, was the release of the most expansive, highly detailed fantasy gaming world ever conceived: the Forgotten Realms. New adventures and accessories for Dragonlance and Forgotten Realms were introduced in 1988, along with an update of the oldest AD&D campaign world in the form of the *Greyhawk Adventures* rulebook.

> I liked the fact that you could make something up and then have people interact with it. That aspect—the outlet of creativity (and the fact that people would pay attention to what you created) was the best.
>
> —Monte Cook, Game Designer, Malhavoc Press

As the 80s drew to a close, the gaming community exploded with the monumental release of AD&D's second edition in 1989. The reception of the long-awaited revision was staggering—many stores, which had taken pre-orders from the majority of their customers, ordered ten times their normal allotment. Product delivered on a Friday was entirely sold out by the following Monday. At the center of the second edition game were the familiar three core rulebooks, with one twist. The second edition *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* were published as hardbound rulebooks, but the new *Monstrous Compendium, Volume One*, came in the form of a large three-ring binder, complete with tabbed dividers featuring full-color art and a booklet that featured one monster on each of its predrilled pages. Additional *Monstrous Compendium* volumes followed in years to come, each adding more creatures and pages to the binder.

Accompanying the core rulebooks were the first two books in the Complete Hero series: the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* and the *Complete Thief's Handbook*. This new series (which expanded further in 1990 with the *Complete Priest's Handbook* and the *Complete Wizard's Handbook*) offered players additional options and rules that helped them customize, define, and play each of the respective classes. Another notable release in 1989 was the introduction of the *Spelljammer* campaign setting, an innovative and popular "spacefaring" setting that evoked the excitement and romance of pirates and privateers sailing the high seas. The setting put characters aboard magical ships sailing through oceans of space between the crystal spheres that housed each of the AD&D worlds. The following year immersed the AD&D game in horror with the *Ravenloft* cam-

I started playing D&D when I was a highschool teacher. One of my students, Heidi Gygax, gave me a copy of her father's invention—the blue box "Basic Game" set. I knew nothing of Heidi or her dad's connection to the game, which I had heard of but had never seen. One day she gave me a pass to get out of class the following day, because she was going to be interviewed by *People* magazine. Well, that raised my eyebrows, and I asked why. She said, "Well, my dad invented this game, and they're doing a story on it. . . ." She brought me a copy of the game on a Wednesday, and by Friday night I had my friends together and ran my first adventure.

—Doug Niles, author

→ POOL OF RADIANCE
Produced by Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI) in 1988, the *Pool of Radiance* computer game was the first in a series of successful "Gold Box" AD&D games. The game allowed the player to create an adventuring party that would explore a dungeon in first-person perspective and battle various monsters from the AD&D game in turn-based combat sequences.

THE CREATION AND DISCOVERY OF THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

No, it didn't all start with Elminster. Picture a dark, wood-paneled room crammed with home-made, waste-not-an-inch bookshelves. Call this: my father's den. The long-legged geek curled up on the sofa reading is me. I have free run of this lovely storehouse of words, from Plato and *Mein Kampf* to World War II mystery paperbacks ("Give One to a Friend in Uniform!") and all the classics of fantasy.

I read and read, until every last thing has been read, by which time I'm about six. I want more, but Dad is installing top-secret radar stuff a lot of somewheres far away, so I can't ask him to get any. I have a handful of characters I love, and I want to know "What happened to them *next*?"

So I write stories. Bad stories, rambling stories, sometimes unfinished stories. From them, I graduate to spicing up the stories with people I see in real life (for instance, those who I like or hate at school, which I'm just starting).

Out of one of the stories, a fat, puffing walrus of a food-stained, large-bellied, wheezing, floppy-booted, sly merchant comes staggering: Mirt the Moneylender, a merchant who plays the buffoon so as to best young, sneering rivals. A soft-hearted, gruff, prodigiously-drinking man with a past, he swindles and deals his way from city to city on a coast—the Sword Coast—in a fantasy world. Like the Fafhrd & the Gray Mouser series, these little stories are set in the same world, self-contained episodes in the life of a man of many faults.

Mirt acquires a companion: the taciturn Durnan—a thinking-man's Conan—and friends, from Elminster to Storm Silverhand. With the tale "One Comes, Unheralded, to Zirta," the world that holds Waterdeep becomes the Forgotten Realms.

Dungeons & Dragons appears seven years later, in 1974. I adapt everything in the Realms into game terms, and regular Realmsplay begins. The Realms grows and grows, until I start to get funny ideas about fairness. Such as: I really shouldn't hurl this monster or magic item or spell at my players until it's been formally written up and published—made part of the official rules.

Behold the "Dragon's Bestiary," which has that promise of officialdom printed at the head of every monster. So off to *The Dragon* (as the mag is then called; I've been buying and reading it every month since issue #19) the first monster goes: the Curst, published in issue #30 (1979). Easy-peazy. Money, even!

Things appear in print almost as fast as I can tear them out of the typewriter and mail them off, and Elminster rises to the fore, as a somewhat unreliable, tart-tongued source of Realmslore. The "Pages from the Mages" approach seems a more interesting way of presenting spells and embellishments (such as sigils, runes, and warnings) than merely listing spells . . . and so the Realmslore creeps in. So although the world doesn't know it yet, *Dragon* has launched the Realms.

There comes a day when Jeff Grubb (TSR designer and regular *Dragon* reader in search of a world to host the second edition of AD&D) telephones me and asks the fateful question: "Do you really have a big, detailed fantasy world at home, or do you make all of this stuff up as you go along?"

"Yes," I tell him, "and yes."

"Great!" he responds. "Send it!" Well, I simplify here, but I'm hungry to get beautiful maps of the Realms for my campaign in glorious color without crayon marks. I start typing and sending weekly packages of Realmslore until Jeff pleads with me to stop, because he and Karen Boomgarden (who edit what's now known as "the Old Gray Box") are running out of room to stash all of my notes.

Bruce Heard of TSR sends me my first TSR writing project to show me the ropes (the *Endless Stair* D&D module), with Karen as my editor. I learn to hit deadlines and follow TSR format, but not the most important lesson: how to fit things into the necessary word lengths. This is why Jeff and Karen have to perform such heroics to squeeze stuff into the Old Gray Box, and even wilder feats to cram *Waterdeep and The North* into 64 pages (I'd need 6,400 pages to do a proper job, I think).

Gamers love the Realms—which is why I'm still running it (albeit more slowly) all these years later—as boxes upon boxes of not-yet-used, faint pencil Realmslore notes sit in my basement, slowly moldering.

Which reminds me: I really must get around to doing the first novel about Mirt.

—Ed Greenwood, creator of the Forgotten Realms, author

↑ DUNGEONS & DRAGONS DOMINOES D&D-themed dominoes featuring characters from the Saturday morning cartoon were produced in the Netherlands in 1987.

↑ THE COMPLETE THIEF'S HANDBOOK The Complete series offered up an innovation in AD&D: the kit. Essentially a series of advantages and disadvantages applied to your character to grant the PC a theme, kits were uneven at best with many having little or no hindrances to balance the power they granted.

The thing that got me hooked when I started, I think, was the sense of accomplishment—building characters who became more and more powerful over time, and able to take on tougher and tougher opponents. Later on, I think it was the imagineering of building worlds and epics as a hobby. These days, it's about comradeship, relaxation, and the fun of pretending that you can just pound evil out of the world with a broadsword.

—Rich Baker, Senior Designer, RPG R&D

30 YEARS OF D&D 1986-1990

1991-1995

The *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*, published in 1991, offered AD&D players a harsh and gritty desert world filled with new challenges to face. At the same time, the world of the Forgotten Realms expanded with the "discovery" of the Maztica setting and the unearthing of an unfathomably large dungeon that came in the form of the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set. The *Complete Psionics Handbook* fully expanded the psionics rules presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The release of the *D&D Cyclopedia* combined the rules from the *Basic, Expert, Companion,* and *Masters* boxed sets into one hardcover, offering players the "complete" rules for the original Dungeons & Dragons game. At the same time, an all-new *D&D Basic Set* was released. Featuring a game board and playing pieces, "step-by-step" rules for the game were presented on cards (as well as in a rulebook) in order to make the game more user-friendly for new gamers. The next year saw the release of several new support products for AD&D campaign settings, including Dark Sun, Dragonlance, Greyhawk, Ravenloft, and Spelljammer, as well as the launch of a new Arabian adventure setting called Al-Qadim.

> As time wore on, I learned that what I really liked was evoking emotion from players. When emotion enters into it, suddenly you're not just sitting around rolling dice playing games with numbers.
>
> —Monte Cook, Game Designer, Malhavoc Press

The next two years were marked by a couple of experiments that incorporated electronic media into the D&D game. In 1993, the *Dragonstrike AdventureVision* game introduced novice gamers to the world of roleplaying with the aid of four game boards, game cards, and plastic miniatures of heroes and monsters—along with an entertaining videotape that showed young players the basics of the game. In 1994, TSR explored the realm of compact discs with the FirstQuest Audio CD game and the new *Mystara* campaign setting, which was comprised of several adventures and boxed sets that included CDs featuring sound effects, music, and prerecorded narration.

Also released in 1994 was the first installation of the exhaustive four-volume accessory—the *Encyclopedia Magica*—which compiled every magic item from every AD&D world (including items originally presented in *Dragon* and *Dungeon*). The most noteworthy release of 1994 was the introduction of the Planescape campaign setting, which offered gamers perilously exciting adventures set in the various planes of the multiverse. The new Birthright campaign setting dominated the 1995 release schedule with more than a dozen products released in just the first year. The setting allowed players to create characters of royal lineage and responsibility that were in control of kingdoms and also included a new set of rules for staging battles between armies. Also released in 1995 was a pair of hardcover rulebooks: *Player's Option: Skills & Powers* and *Player's Option: Combat & Tactics*. These two books introduced several new rules and mechanics (such as the skill system and attacks of opportunity), which were later incorporated into the core rules for third edition.

Skills and Powers was my favorite second edition product. I loved the whole *Player's Option* series, which came out while I was working as a minister in Ohio and really spurred my interest in D&D all over again.
—James Wyatt, Designer, RPG R&D

My favorite second edition AD&D product was the Planescape campaign setting, although I'm also a big fan of the *Player's Option* series of books.
—Andy Collins, Developer, RPG R&D

I've always had a fondness for *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, the old first edition module that blended sci-fi with fantasy. I've run that adventure many times in many different game systems, and it's always a riot.
—Jonathan Tweet, Miniatures Design Manager, RPG R&D

→ THE SIMPSONS

D&D makes several appearances on *The Simpsons*, beginning in 1993 with "Homer Goes to College." Homer fails a competency test and has to enroll at Springfield University in order to keep his job. After Homer first meets his three new tutors, he goes home for dinner and excitedly tells the family "We played Dungeons & Dragons for three hours! Then I was slain by an elf."

In the 1994 "Treehouse of Terror VI" Halloween episode, in the spoof titled "Nightmare on Evergreen Street," Martin Prince proclaims "I am the wondrous wizard of Latin! I am a dervish of declension and a conjurer of conjugation, with a million hit points and maximum Charisma."

A 1998 episode titled "Lost Our Lisa" featured a scene where Lisa tries to take a seat on a bus next to the Comic Book Guy who is wearing a shirt that reads "Dungeon Master." Not interested in first answering Comic Book Guy's "questions three," Lisa moves on to find another seat.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIRD EDITION

Planning and brainstorming for a new edition of Dungeons & Dragons began under TSR, while the company was still in Lake Geneva. When Wizards of the Coast purchased the company and moved us to Seattle, Peter Adkison began discussions with me to develop a plan for making the new edition a reality. By combining the best of the two newly paired companies' R&D resources, we set out to take the gaming community by storm. Our initial goal was simple—we should only move ahead if we could make the game demonstrably better than it was. This carried through the design and development team, down to each rules change.

I believe that the greatest innovation of the new edition was deciding to knock everything down to the foundation and rebuild the game system from the ground up. That allowed us to take what I've described as a loveable Frankenstein's monster, cobbled together with disparate mechanics, and streamline and modernize the game system to make a better, more intuitive game. So, for example, instead of making it necessary to remember which die rolls you want to be high and which you want to be low, we developed a basic mechanic that called for high rolls all the time. This basic mechanic, the heart of the d20 System, gave us clear direction as we built the rest of the game.

For the upgrade we did last year, known as version 3.5, we made the connection to a three-dimensional play area more substantial. Visualizing encounters and combat situations in three dimensions makes play clearer and more precise, allows for some cool feats and tactics, and in many ways helped make the game a bit more accessible to a wider audience. Perhaps it wasn't an innovation, but I certainly see it as a key development of the upgrade to the edition.

–Bill Slavicsek, Director, RPG/Miniatures R&D

I received the *D&D Basic Set* as a gift for my 10th birthday in 1981. I'd never heard of the game before, but as a Tolkien junkie, I immediately recognized this as something cool. Not knowing any other players, I had to teach myself how to play this strange game with no board and no playing pieces. About a year later, I DMed my first session, leading my brother Greg and my friend Kurt through the Caves of Chaos in the classic adventure *B2: Keep on the Borderlands*. We played for nine hours straight, missing both lunch and dinner without realizing it.
–Andy Collins, Developer, RPG R&D

In choosing my favorite second edition product, it's a tie. I have a real love of good campaign settings, and I think TSR hit gold twice in the 90s with Dark Sun and Planescape. (I didn't work on either line until after the campaign setting boxes were finished.)
–Bill Slavicsek, Director, RPG/Miniatures R&D

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TRIVIA GAME
Published in 1991, the *AD&D Trivia Game* challenged players with questions such as "Which type of genie has an amirate organization?" "Under what conditions does a creature's magic resistance apply?" and "Which two spells in the *Player's Handbook* require only a somatic component?"

WEEZER
Weezer's 1994 self-titled album featured the song *In the Garage*, with "I've got a Dungeon Master's Guide. I've got a 12-sided die. . . ." as its opening lyrics.

MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH
In 1994, the *Masque of the Red Death* boxed set released under the banner of the Ravenloft line. The setting used D&D rules with new classes to play out the drama of fighting evil in a horrific version of Earth during the 1890s.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TRADING CARDS
From 1991 to 1993, TSR published a series of trading cards featuring characters, monsters, and treasure from the AD&D game. TSR staff members appeared in cards that featured photographs.

1996-2000

The most innovative offering for the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons game in 1996 was the *AD&D Core Rules CD ROM*. The completely searchable and cross-indexed computer accessory put all of the game's core material, including character and monster generation, at a player's fingertips. Another monumental undertaking saw print that same year in the form of the four-volume *Wizard's Spell Compendium*, which compiled—from rulebooks, adventures, accessories, and both *Dungeon* and *Dragon*—every spell created for wizards in the AD&D game. The popularity of the impossibly dense collection of wizard's spells led to an inevitable companion series, the three-volume *Priest's Spell Compendium*. Another pioneering effort in roleplaying in 1996 was the publication of the *Dragonlance: Fifth Age* dramatic adventure game. The *Fifth Age* game made use of the new SAGA rules, which introduced (as an alternative to dice rolling) an 82-card Fate Deck that gave players more direct control over their characters and the game's storyline.

One chapter into The Fellowship of the Ring and I was hooked on fantasy. I saw the D&D "blue boxed set" and purchased it on impulse. I fell in love with the game right away.

—Peter Adkison, CEO, Gen Con LLC

By the mid 90s, after an assortment of difficulties and despite the success of several new brand lines and product releases, TSR lost its partner in the book market, causing finances to grow dangerously tight. In 1997 the Dungeons & Dragons game was given a new lease on life as Wizards of the Coast bought the failing TSR Inc. During the course of the year, TSR's Wisconsin offices were closed, and the remaining staff members relocated to Renton, Washington to join the Wizards of the Coast team. The transitional year saw no major releases for AD&D, although supplements and other releases maintained support of the game.

Over the next two years, the AD&D game drew upon its inner strength with product offerings built with material taken straight from its foundation. Products such as *Return to the Tomb of Horrors* and *Return to the Keep on the Borderlands* allowed gamers to explore and re-explore some of the most popular adventures ever produced. The *Player's Guide to Greyhawk* offered gamers a fresh new look at the original fantasy setting that started it all. In 1999, the Dungeons & Dragons game celebrated its first twenty-five years with the release of the *AD&D Silver Anniversary Collector's Edition Boxed Set*, which featured several reproductions of original rulebooks and adventures from the game's modest, but still impressive, beginnings.

The start of a new millennium also heralded the dawn of a new era for the Dungeons & Dragons game, as the much-anticipated third edition rules exploded into the world of roleplaying. The innovative and ground-breaking third edition rules introduced an astonishing array of ideas, rules, and mechanics that offered a more streamlined, balanced, and flexible version of the game than had ever been imagined. The most notable development for the new edition of the game was the innovative d20 System, which established among other things that all success or failure rolls (such as attacks, skill checks, saving throws, and so on) would be determined by adding modifiers to the roll of a single 20-sided die. Accompanying the d20 System was the revolutionary Open Gaming License (OGL), which enabled countless third-party publishers to make use of the essential core of the D&D rules in products of their own design. The combination of the d20 System and the OGL led to an explosion of supplements, adventures, and other compatible support material for the Dungeons & Dragons game, which energized the entire gaming community.

My favorite third edition product was the *Player's Handbook*. Obviously, I have a deep personal attachment to this as I played a very active role in seeing this product come to press. We took a huge gamble with third edition in that we changed so many of the rules, and in some cases, quite dramatically, that I was quite fearful of being the target of a huge industry backlash. I had nightmares of D&D players all over the world hating me. But I had a very strong vision of what I thought would be a great new age for D&D, and I was fortunate enough to work with an amazing design team who were willing to rally around that vision and design a great set of rules to support it. I feel incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to work on this product.

—Peter Adkison, CEO, Gen Con LLC

Narrowing down the projects I've worked on to a single favorite is a tough one. I've worked on *a lot* of D&D books, and each time, I want it to be the best thing I've ever done. I'm pretty proud of the world we crafted for the *Birthright Campaign Setting*.

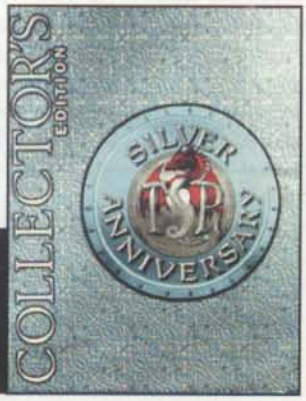
—Rich Baker, Senior Designer, RPG R&D

✦✦✦DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: THE MOVIE
Released in 2000, the full-length feature film starred Thora Birch, Jeremy Irons, Marlon Wayans, and Justin Whalin in a magic-filled fantasy adventure story complete with orcs, beholders, and dragons—lots of dragons (somewhere between 75 and 100 CGI wyrms fill the skies in the climactic battle scene).

✦MARCY PLAYGROUND
The self-titled 1997 release by the band Marcy Playground featured a song titled "Cloak of Elvenkind."

✦FUTURAMA
First airing in May of 2000, an episode of the popular animated series *Futurama*, titled "Anthology of Interest I" included a "what if Fry had never been frozen" segment that featured Dungeons & Dragons co-creator Gary Gygax as a member of Al Gore's Vice Presidential Action Rangers. The Rangers are intent on saving the universe's time-space continuum by ensuring that Fry is cryogenically frozen. Fry claims that he needs a weapon to fight off "killer robots" that await him in the future, prompting Gary to offer him his *+1 mace*, which Fry uses to smash the cryotube, destroying the universe and stranding the characters in Limbo—where they decide to play D&D for all eternity.

✦✦DUNGEONS & DRAGONS SILVER ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S EDITION
Released in 1999 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the D&D game, the *Silver Anniversary Collector's Edition* was a slipcased box filled with an array of nostalgia-inducing material. Inside was a replica of the original Dungeons & Dragons rulebook, a 32-page book outlining the history of TSR (including a retrospective essay by Gary Gygax), and a suitable-for-framing art print by Jeff Easley created especially for the box. Also inside were facsimiles of several of the game's most popular early adventure modules: *B2: Keep on the Borderlands*, *G1: Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*, *G2: Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl*, *G3: Hall of the Fire Giant King*, *I6: Ravenloft*, and *S2: White Plume Mountain*. Also included was a copy of *L3: Deep Dwarven Delve*—a recently recovered, never-before-released first edition adventure.



THE X-FILES
The 1996 episode titled "Jose Chung's From Outer Space" involved a novelist researching an alien-abduction story. One of the interviewees, when asked about being nervous about telling his story after receiving death threats warning him not to, replied: "Well, hey, I didn't spend all those years playing Dungeons & Dragons and not learn a little something about courage."

A 1997 episode of The X-Files, entitled "Unusual Suspects" featured a high-stakes backroom game of Dungeons & Dragons with one of the Lone Gunmen, accompanied by the line, "Daddy needs a new *sword of wounding*." The game materials used as props in the scene were donated from the personal collections of Wizards of the Coast employees.

THE ONION
The satirical weekly newspaper has often included reference or mention of D&D. One of the more notable articles from Volume 31, Issue 21 (June 18th, 1997) featured the headline "Bill Gates Grants Self 18 Dexterity, 20 Charisma." The article presents a character sheet that detailed a chaotic evil half-elven character named Bilbo of the Gatepeople who, along with ability scores that had been augmented to "near-immortal levels" and 1.5 million hit points, also possessed an array of magic items that included a bag of holdings and Mordenkainen's spectacles of true sight.

2001-2004

The overwhelming reception of the third edition of the Dungeons & Dragons game set the stage for an unprecedented flurry of new product releases that began in 2001. The first "super adventure" for the new edition of the game gave players the opportunity to re-explore another of the game's most popular classic adventures in the form of *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil*. *Sword and Fist*, a supplement filled with material (such as feats, prestige classes, and weapons) that focused on fighters and monks was the first in a series that offered each of the eleven core character classes new options, abilities, and material. *Manual of the Planes* opened the portal to adventure on the various planes of existence, while the third-edition incarnation of *Oriental Adventures* gave players completely updated fantasy-Asia campaign material and included its own default setting based on the Legend of the Five Rings world of Rokugan. The *Psionics Handbook* provided complete rules for playing psionic characters and introduced two new core classes. The most significant release of the year came in the form of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. The book offered an exhaustive amount of material for adventuring in the most comprehensive campaign world ever conceived—and at 320 pages, it became the largest book ever published for the D&D game.

My favorite aspect of D&D is the flexibility to take the game in any direction you'd like and have your character do anything. Simply put, D&D is so many things, all at once—a game, a hobby, and a form of art. What's not to love?

—Peter Adkinson, CEO, Gen Con LLC

For the current edition, my favorite book (other than all the ones I helped write, of course) is probably *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil*. I love the fact that an all new generation of gamers has the "shared experience" of going through this adventure, just like we old-timers shared *Keep on the Borderlands*, *Against the Giants*, *Vault of the Drow*, and so on.

—Andy Collins, Developer, RPG R&D

To pick a favorite product for third edition and 3.5, I have to choose among my children. The core rulebooks set the standard and remain favorites, and I think that the work done on the *Draconomicon* was just brilliant. And then there are the D&D miniatures that get better and better with each new set we release. My current favorite, though, is the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. What we're doing with this new world just makes me remember why I love D&D. I think it's a fitting gift for our audience as part of our thirtieth anniversary celebration.

—Bill Slavicsek, Director, RPG/Miniatures R&D

By 2002, new material for the D&D game was being released almost on a monthly basis. The *Epic Level Handbook* provided rules and guidelines for playing characters at 21st level and up—allowing campaigns to take on mythic proportions as characters slowly developed abilities that could rival even the deities of their fantasy worlds. The Chainmail miniatures game, (named after Gary Gygax's original miniatures combat rules), offered gamers a skirmish-level, head-to-head miniatures game based on the D&D combat rules, as well as a new line of official D&D metal miniatures. The option of playing monsters as characters was introduced in *Savage Species*, an immensely popular supplement that soundly demonstrated the flexibility and balance of the new edition of the D&D rules. Also released that year was the *Book of Vile Darkness*, the first D&D supplement intended for mature audiences, which presented gamers with material that explored the complex challenges of confronting (and defeating) "truly evil" villains and monsters. The *Book of Exalted Deeds*, a companion sourcebook which followed in 2003, offered players the challenge of taking up the mantle of "truly good" heroes worthy of combating the abominable monsters and fiends unleashed in *Book of Vile Darkness*.

The year 2003 was dominated by the release of the revised core rulebooks. Expanded to 320 pages apiece, the retooled *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual* incorporated player feedback to provide an even more well-balanced and clearly defined set of rules that more closely fit with the way the Dungeons & Dragons game was being played.

Another significant product in 2003 came in the form of pre-painted, plastic miniatures. The *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* line's first expansion, *Harbinger*, offered gamers a collection of 80 collectable miniatures that were ready-for-play right out of their randomized boxes. With double-sided stat cards, D&D miniatures offered roleplayers and miniatures combat gamers an array of heroes, villains, and monsters taken straight out of the D&D rulebooks. Two more miniatures expansions, *Dragoneye* (in late 2003) and *Archfiends* (in early 2004), quickly followed the initial release, each adding another 60 miniatures to the line's growing collection. The most recent expansion, *Giants of Legend*, presents another 60 miniatures, including the first twelve Huge miniatures.

February of 2004 saw the publication of a new supplement titled *Unearthed Arcana*. Inspired by its innovative first edition namesake, *Unearthed Arcana* presented an inexhaustible array of alternate and variant rules and options for gamers to incorporate into their "homebrewed" campaign worlds. The most significant release of 2004, the *Eberron Campaign Setting*, is the product of a worldwide search that began back in 2002 and resulted in over 11,000 submissions from D&D fans. The expansive campaign setting offers players an entire magic-infused world of action and intrigue to explore.

✦DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CLUE
Released in 2001 by USAopoly, *Dungeons & Dragons Clue* offered players the opportunity to play the classic detective board game with a distinctively D&D twist—complete with pewter miniatures. Players each took on the role of one of six of the iconic characters from the *Player's Handbook* with the goal of discovering which of them was the murderous doppelganger. The *Dungeons & Dragons Clue* board game also introduced an all-new mechanic to the game—random monster encounters. By landing on a square that featured claw marks, a player would draw a card from the monster deck and battle the creature (with a single roll of the game's six-sided die). Victory would reward the character with a one-shot magic item, such as a *potion of speed*, while defeat would cast the character into a maze at the center of the game board.

✦REVISED EDITION
In 2003, Wizards of the Coast updated the rules of 3rd edition D&D, incorporating errata and rules changes desired by designers and fans alike.

Of the products I've worked on, I'd have to say the *Eberron Campaign Setting* is my favorite. If I have to nominate a product I didn't work on, I'd say *Unearthed Arcana*. Both books are like new jolts of energy into the game, opening lots of new possibilities and sparking a lot of creative ideas for me.
—James Wyatt, Designer, RPG R&D

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
A 2001 episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* entitled "Smashed" featured a scene in which Xander believes he's discovered reference to a demon the group is looking for in an arcane tome that's revealed to be a D&D rulebook.

SPIDER-MAN
If you keep your eyes open while watching 2002's *Spider-Man*, starring Tobey Maguire, you can catch a glimpse of a *Dungeons & Dragons Adventure Game* poster on the wall behind some jackets in Peter Parker's room right at the beginning of the scene in which Peter's spider bite-induced transformation takes place.

VIN DIESEL
Tattooed across the stomach of Xander Cage (Vin Diesel's character) in the 2002 movie, *XXX*, is the name "Melkor," which Diesel explained (on the *Conan O'Brien Show*) is the name of one of his old D&D characters.

paizo PUBLISHING, LLC

✦PAIZO PUBLISHING
In 2002, Paizo Publishing opened its doors with the license to publish *Dungeon* and *Dragon*.

✦FIST OF EMIRIKOL
An oversized (55mm) twenty-side die featuring stylized runes and sigils derived primarily from various D&D rulebooks (first, second, and third edition), the *fist of Emirikol* (named after a rampaging wizard from an illustration in the first edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*) was part of the RPGA's Player Rewards Program in 2003.

INDY
GEN CON
THE BEST FOUR DAYS IN GAMING!

✦GEN CON INDY
Throughout the 90s, the needs of the Gen Con game fair expanded, and attendance slowly outgrew the hotel capacity of downtown Milwaukee. It became apparent that the game fair needed to, once more, find a new home. In August of 2003, Gen Con opened in the Indiana Convention Center.

✦OLIDAMMARA'S DICE
Based on a minor artifact in the *Epic Level Handbook*, a limited run of custom-designed dice were created in 2002 to be given away with the purchase of the book (while supplies lasted).

REVAMPING THE "RED BOX"

"READ THIS BOOK FIRST!"

Back in 1983, the *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set*, which became known as the "Red Box," introduced countless first-time gamers to the world of fantasy roleplaying with sample scenarios, examples of roleplaying, and easy-to-grasp rules. The new *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Game*, releasing in September, has the same purpose, but a different approach.

The *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Game* walks first-time gamers into the realms of fantasy adventure by introducing game concepts and rules over the course of several adventures. Beginning with pre-generated characters, plastic miniatures, and a single map tile, the first adventure is relatively simple—almost board-gamelike—in order to give new players a chance to grow comfortable with rolling dice, making decisions, and taking actions as their characters. As game play progresses through the 12-page *Adventure Book*, more map tiles are used, tougher monsters are encountered, and adventures grow progressively more complex. Characters slowly accumulate experience and eventually earn enough XPs to "level up" using the rules inside the *Expanded Rulebook*. (The 64-page *Expanded Rulebook* also offers character generation rules, more detailed game play rules, and guidelines for creating original adventures.) At this point, players have fully functional 2nd-level characters that can be played in any Dungeons & Dragons campaign until they're ready for 3rd level and the *Player's Handbook*.

> The Dungeons & Dragons Basic Game is designed to be a new player's first experience with D&D. It has clear and concise instructions and a simple—not simplified—approach to introducing new players to the game.
>
> —Bill Slavicsek, Senior Designer, RPG R&D

While more experienced gamers can certainly make use of the miniatures, dice, and map tiles in their existing campaigns, the *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Game* also offers them a great way to draw new players into their games. Because the rules were written to teach the game to first-time gamers, the *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Game* can be given as a gift to be explored without "expert" supervision. D&D isn't hard to learn, but it can be hard to teach, and that's what the *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Game* was designed to do.

A USER-FRIENDLY D100

The percentile die included in the set has a new design that features incremental numbers from 10-100 (as opposed to 10-00) so that, when rolled along with the d10, the result can be obtained by simply adding the two numbers together. It's a small change, but it makes a big difference for someone new to the game because they don't have to figure out how to read a d% roll—it's like any other roll of the dice: you just add them up.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

16 fully painted miniatures
- Regdar, Adventurer
- Lidda, Adventurer
- Aramil, Adventurer
- Eberk, Adventurer
- Medium Black Dragon
- Troglodyte
- Dire Rat
- Wolf Skeleton
- (2) Warrior Skeleton
- (2) Orc Warrior
- (2) Kobold Warrior
- (2) Kobold Skirmisher

4 double-sided map tiles
4 character cards
7 dice
Quick-Start Rulebook
Adventure Book
Expanded Rulebook

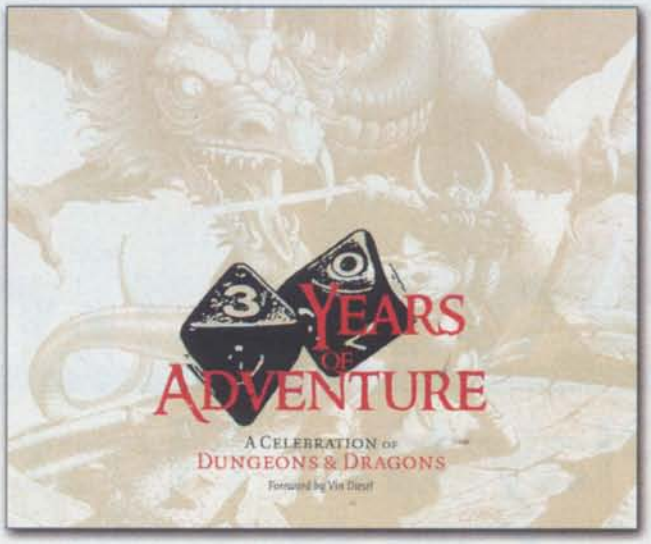
In 1979, the original *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set* offered the "complete D&D game"—a 48-page rule book—along with an introductory adventure module, *B1: Keep on the Borderlands*, and two cardstock sheets of punch-out "randomizer chits."

By 1981, the D&D game had grown to the point at which a new boxed set was released. This new *Basic Set* was comprised of a 64-page rulebook, a reprint of *Keep on the Borderlands*, and a set of polyhedral dice (complete with marking crayon). A companion to this *Basic Set* was the *D&D Expert Set*, which expanded the game with another 64-page rulebook and the adventure module *X1: Isle of Dread*.

The "Red Box" released in 1983, and consisted of a 48-page *Player's Guide* and a 64-page *Dungeon Master's Handbook*, along with a set of dice and a marker crayon. The *Player's Guide* eased a new player into the game by slowly building knowledge and understanding of the game (with both simple and expert combat rules, magic spells, and roleplaying tips). The *Dungeon Master's Handbook* assumed a player had read the *Player's Guide* and was prepared for the challenge of creating adventures filled with monsters, dungeons, and treasure. The "Red Box" *Basic Set* was the first of five boxed sets that expanded the scope of the Dungeons & Dragons game.

30 YEARS OF ADVENTURE

A CELEBRATION OF DUNGEONS & DRAGONS



This fall, you'll encounter a 352-page collector's book that celebrates the rich history of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. While filled with historical details and insights, the book is not a corporate history, but more of a collection of "war stories" about the game and what it was like to "be there" as it was happening—the sort of tales you'd hear while sitting around a favorite taproom or kitchen table. The 30-year history of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is told through a patchwork of essays written by people who were actually there—making and playing the game as it developed.

The origins and development of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, beginning with Gary Gygax and Jeff Perren's *CHAINMAIL* game and Dave Arneson's "storming the castle through the sewers" scenario, is described by Harold Johnson. His accounts of those earliest years touch on the founding of TSR, Inc., the development of the game (including the AD&D rules), and the increasing popularity of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game as it carved its way into the world of gaming.

The introduction of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS second edition—and the subsequent era of explosive growth and challenging setbacks for TSR and the game—is chronicled by Steve Winter. His essays illuminate a time when new fantasy worlds and gaming frontiers were explored, and the influence of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game became a worldwide phenomenon.

The most recent period of D&D's remarkable history is related in a collection of interviews, stories, and anecdotes written and collected by Peter Adkison and Ed Stark. Together, they tell both sides of the story of Wizards of the Coast's acquisition of TSR, along with the collaborative development and release of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS third edition.

Scattered throughout the book are more than two dozen sidebars written by a wide variety of personalities and celebrities, including novelists, musicians, Hollywood writers, actors, and directors, and more. Each person's contribution delves into his or her personal experiences with the game and offers some insight into how the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game affected their lives (and, in many cases, still does.)

From front cover to back, virtually every page in the art-heavy book is adorned with some sort of evocative image from D&D's past—making each page turn a nostalgia-filled discovery. You'll come across spot illustrations, interior art, cover art, and packaging from D&D game books, novels, and licensed products, along with photographs of the personalities, products, and events that have shaped the world of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS over the past thirty years.

Make room on your coffee table (or bookshelf, if you prefer) for an amazing trip through a world of entertainment that has graced countless kitchen tables for thirty years—and counting.

I'm having a great time working on this book. It's impressive to see the impact it's made on so many folks.

—Peter Archer, Editorial Director, Associate Publisher, Books

In 1974, a new phenomenon burst onto the cultural scene: the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.

Armed with dice, pencils, paper, and rulebooks, thousands of people set forth on a quest of the imagination. Along the way, they battled monsters, discovered treasure, and trekked through countless dungeons, keeps, castles, and lairs.

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS experience created an industry. Not only did it spawn similar roleplaying games, it had a profound impact on the burgeoning computer gaming industry. Around the world and over the years, people from all walks of life joined in this game of monsters and magic.

This book is a celebration of that phenomenon and a tribute to the millions of players who brought the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS experience to life.

30 YEARS OF D&D 1974-2004

DRAGON

PLAYER CHARACTERS

Play the Most Powerful Creatures in D&D

by Mike McArtor · illustrated by Jason Engle

Majestic, powerful, arrogant, and selfish, dragons are *the* iconic monsters of D&D. The game is even named for them. Since the creation of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, dragons have terrorized, driven off, and slaughtered countless characters in myriad worlds, campaigns, and adventures. Some players who encountered these fantastic beasts dared to want more from these scaly bringers of woe. Not content with slaying the dragon, these players wanted to *be* the dragon.

Now, they can.

DRAGON MONSTER CLASS ADVANCEMENT

First introduced in *Savage Species,* monster classes are a way for players to start out at 1st level as one of their favorite monsters. Because most monsters are inherently more powerful than a human or elf, the only way for them to fairly start the game at 1st level is to treat monsters as character classes. The rules presented here allow you to play a metallic dragon as a 1st-level character and advance that character up to 20th level, just as any other character class. In this way, your 13th-level brass dragon is roughly as strong as a 13th-level character using a standard race and one or more of the eleven base classes.

Note that, as in *Savage Species,* the ability score adjustments listed in the level advancement tables stack, but the natural armor bonuses do not. The natural armor bonus listed for a particular level is the dragon's new natural armor bonus.

COMMON DRAGON RACIAL TRAITS

All dragons have the following in common.

- **Dragon Type:** Dragons are immune to effects that only affect humanoids, such as *charm person.* This is a boon to any dragon who travels with humanoids.
- **Keen senses (Ex):** A dragon can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision and can see in the dark up to 120 feet.
- **Immunities (Ex):** All dragons have immunity to sleep and paralysis effects. Each type of dragon has one or two additional immunities as given in its description.
- **Dragon Overland Movement (Ex):** Once a dragon attains a fly speed of at least 100 feet, it gains the ability to fly over

vast distances in a single day. See the *Monster Manual*, page 70, for how far a dragon can fly in an hour or a day, based on its fly speed.

• **Automatic Languages:** Draconic. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).

• **Favored Class:** Dragon. A dragon cannot multiclass into another dragon class. The best multiclassing choice for a dragon is fighter or barbarian, although taking levels as a sorcerer advances the dragon's spellcasting ability. Players of dragon characters should also consider the dragon prestige classes in the *Draconomicon*.

Common Dragon Class Skills

A dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), and Use Magic Device (Cha). Each dragon kind has additional class skills as listed in its description.

Common Dragon Class Features

All of the following are class features of dragon classes. Each dragon class gains these features at different character levels. Check the descriptions below and the dragon's monster class advancement table to see when a dragon gains the class feature in question.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dragons have no proficiency with weapons, armor, or shields in dragon form. A dragon in humanoid form is proficient with simple weapons.

Age Category: As described in the Dragon PCs and Age Categories sidebar, dragon level progressions do not require a player to wait hundreds of years before advancing his dragon character. For reference, the dragon's age category is listed at the level it attains all the traits and features it requires to be considered a dragon of that age. At levels before wyrmling

LEVELS ABOVE ECL

The ECLs for each dragon type's age categories use the level adjustments established in the *Monster Manual*. As such, only the gold dragon has an age category ECL that coincidentally ends at 20th level. All the other dragon types end at 17th or 18th level. In order to provide a 20-level monster class progression for every metallic dragon, all the dragons except gold dragons have their next highest age category ECL estimated and then made into the appropriate class levels.

Brass Dragon

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) × 4	Feat, bite 1d4, 2 claws 1d3
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	*Speak with animals*, +1 natural armor
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, speed 40 ft.
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	Fly 100 ft. (poor), fire breath 1d6, +3 natural armor
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Blindsense
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	—	**Wyrmling**, speed 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 150 ft. (average), *sleep* breath
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+4 natural armor
8	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat
9	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	—	+2 Str, fire breath 2d6, +6 natural armor
10	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	**Very young**, Small size, bite 1d6, claws 1d4
11	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	—	+2 Str, +2 Con, +2 Wis, spells (1st), +8 natural armor
12	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, fire breath 3d6
13	9d12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Cha, +9 natural armor
14	10d12	+10/+5	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	**Young**, Medium size, fly 200 ft. (poor), bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4
15	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Spells (2nd), *endure elements*, +10 natural armor
16	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, fire breath 4d6
17	13d12	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	**Juvenile**, +2 Str, spells (3rd), +12 natural armor
18	14d12	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Wis
19	14d12	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+9	—	+2 Con, +2 Cha, SR 15, spells (4th), +14 natural armor
20	15d12	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Str, fire breath 5d6

Bronze Dragon

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) × 4	Feat, bite 1d6, 2 claws 1d4, water breathing
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	*Speak with animals*, +1 natural armor
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Cha
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	+2 Con, +2 Wis, fly 50 ft. (poor), +2 natural armor
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Lightning breath 1d6
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	—	+2 Int, +2 Wis, speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft., +3 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, lightning breath 2d6
8	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	—	+2 Str, +2 Int, +4 natural armor, blindsense
9	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, *repulsion* breath
10	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	—	**Wyrmling**, speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft., +5 natural armor
11	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	+2 Con, lightning breath 3d6, +6 natural armor
12	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, lightning breath 4d6, +7 natural armor
13	9d12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	**Very Young**, Feat, Medium size, fly 150 ft. (poor), bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4, +8 natural armor
14	10d12	+10/+5	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Alternate form 1/day, +9 natural armor
15	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, lightning breath 5d6
16	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	—	+2 Str, +2 Wis, alternate form 2/day, +10 natural armor
17	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, lightning breath 6d6
18	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	—	**Young**, +2 Int, alternate form 3/day, spells (1st), +11 natural armor
19	13d12	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	+2 Wis, +12 natural armor
20	13d12	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	—	+2 Con, spells (2nd), lightning breath 7d6

status is attained, dragons are considered hatchlings (age category 0).

Blindsense (Ex): Dragons can pinpoint creatures within 60 feet. Opponents the dragon can't see still have total concealment.

Bite: Every dragon has a bite attack that is a natural weapon dealing the indicated damage plus the dragon's Strength modifier. Note that, like all other monsters, dragons do not gain multiple natural attacks for having a high base attack bonus.

Claws: A dragon has up to two claws attacks that are secondary natural attacks dealing the indicated damage plus 1/2 the dragon's Strength bonus.

Wings: Medium and larger dragons can slap opponents with their wings, even while flying. Wing attacks deal the indicated damage plus 1/2 the dragon's Strength bonus and are treated as secondary natural attacks.

Tail Slap: A large dragon has a tail slap attack that is a secondary natural attack dealing the indicated damage plus 1-1/2 times the dragon's Strength bonus.

Breath Weapon (Su): A dragon may use its breath weapon at will as a standard action, but it cannot use the breath weapon again until 1d4 rounds have passed. If it has more than one type of breath weapon, it still can breathe only once every 1d4 rounds. The save DC against a dragon's breath weapon is 10 + 1/2 the dragon's Hit Dice + the dragon's Constitution modifier. See page 69 of the *Monster Manual* for the length of a dragon's breath weapons.

Size Category: As a dragon advances, its size increases as noted in the dragon advancement tables. The dragon gains all the characteristics of the new size, but it does not gain the typical ability score changes due to a size change. The dragon's changes to ability scores are accounted for in the advancement tables.

Spells: Higher-level dragon PCs know and cast arcane spells as a sorcerer of the level indicated in parentheses in their advancement tables, gaining bonus spells for a high Charisma. Each dragon type may also cast spells from the cleric spell list and from the spell lists of two or more domains.

Brass Dragon

Dragon (Fire)

Brass dragons live in the desert and enjoy the dry heat. Talkative and friendly, they are fonts of useful (and sometimes useless) information. For more information about brass dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

COPPER DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d4, 2 claws 1d3
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	+1 natural armor, *spider climb*
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 natural armor
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	–	+2 Cha, speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor), acid breath 1d4
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+3 natural armor, blindsense
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	–	+2 Int, +2 Wis, acid breath 2d4, +4 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	**Wyrmling,** speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), *slow* breath
8	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, acid breath 3d4, +5 natural armor
9	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	+6 natural armor
10	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	–	+2 Str, acid breath 4d4, +7 natural armor
11	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	**Very Young,** Small size, bite 1d6, 2 claws 1d4
12	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	–	+2 Str, +2 Con, acid breath 5d4, +8 natural armor
13	9d12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Int, +2 Cha, +9 natural armor
14	10d12	+10/+5	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Wis, spells (1st), acid breath 6d4, +10 natural armor
15	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	**Young,** Medium size, bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4, fly 150 ft. (poor)
16	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, spells (2nd), +11 natural armor
17	13d12	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, acid breath 7d4, +12 natural armor
18	14d12	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	**Juvenile,** acid breath 8d4, spells (3rd), +13 natural armor
19	15d12	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	+14 natural armor, SR 17
20	15d12	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	–	+2 Str, +2 Con, acid breath 9d4, spells (4th)

ECL AND LA

A creature's effective character level (ECL) is the sum of its Hit Dice, level adjustment, and class levels. Use character level for most game functions except awarding experience, determining starting equipment, and determining how much experience the character needs to gain a new level. For all three of those functions, use effective character level instead.

Level adjustment (LA) is a measure of how much more powerful a creature is than other creatures of its Hit Dice. A level adjustment provides a numeric comparison with the seven standard races from the *Player's Handbook*, showing how much more powerful that creature is than one of the standard races, in terms of levels.

For more information on ECL and LA, see the *Monster Manual* glossary and Monsters as Races on page 172 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. *Savage Species* explains ECL, LA, and monster classes, in chapter 3.

Racial Traits

- Starting Ability Score Adjustment: +2 Con.
- Fire Subtype: Brass dragons have immunity to fire. They take half again as much damage (+50%) as normal from cold damage, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.
- Tiny: As Tiny creatures, wyrmling brass dragons gain a +2 size bonus to Armor Class, a +2 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +8 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are one-half those of Medium characters. Wyrmling brass dragons have a space of 2-1/2 feet by 2-1/2 feet and a reach of 0 feet, which means they must enter an opponent's square to attack in melee combat and draw an attack of opportunity when doing so.
- Brass dragon base land speed is 20 feet.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a brass dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), and Survival (Wis).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the brass dragon monster class.

Feats: A brass dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 8th, 13th, 16th, and 20th level.

Breath Weapon (Su): A brass dragon has two types of breath weapon, a line of fire and a cone of *sleep*. At 4th level, the brass dragon gains its fire breath, and at 6th level, it gains its *sleep* breath. Creatures within the cone of *sleep* must succeed at a Will save or fall asleep, regardless of HD, for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon.

Spell-Like Abilities: Beginning at 2nd level, the brass dragon can cast *speak with animals* at will. At 15th level, the brass dragon can cast *endure elements* three times per day. Caster level equals the dragon's age category (dragons at and below wyrmling level are 1st-level casters, very young dragons are 2nd-level casters, and so on). The saves are Charisma based.

Spells: A brass dragon casts spells from the Chaos and Knowledge domains

as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

Spell Resistance: Beginning at 19th level, a brass dragon has spell resistance 15.

Bronze Dragon

Dragon (Water)

Bronze dragons are curious and observant. They enjoy warfare and fighting for a just cause. While comfortable anywhere, bronze dragons prefer to be near or in oceans and large bodies of fresh water. For more information about bronze dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

Racial Traits

- Water Subtype: A bronze dragon is as at home in the water as it is on the land. It can breathe both water and air.
- Small: As Small creatures, wyrmling bronze dragons gain a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of Medium characters.
- Bronze dragon base land speed is 20 feet. They also have a swim speed of 20 feet. Note that having a swim speed gives bronze dragons the usual +8 racial bonus on Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard in the water.
- Immunity to Electricity: A bronze dragon takes no damage from electricity.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a bronze dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Disguise (Cha), Swim (Str), and Survival (Wis).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bronze dragon monster class.

Feats: A bronze dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 9th, 13th, and 17th level.

Water Breathing (Ex): A bronze dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapons, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Spell-Like Ability: Beginning at 2nd level, a bronze dragon can cast *speak with animals* at will. Caster level equals the dragon's age category (dragons at and below wyrmling level are 1st-level casters, very young dragons are 2nd-level casters, and so on).

Breath Weapon (Su): Bronze dragons have two types of breath weapon, a line of lightning

GOLD DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d8, water breathing
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, +1 natural armor
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	–	+2 Str, +2 Con, alternate form 1/day, weakening breath, +2 natural armor
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, blindsense
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	–	+2 Int, +2 Wis, fly 100 ft. (poor), 2 claws 1d6, fire breath 1d10, +3 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, alternate form 2/day
8	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft., +4 natural armor
9	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	–	+2 Str, +2 Con, fly 150 ft. (poor), fire breath 2d10, +5 natural armor
10	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Alternate form 3/day, +6 natural armor
11	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	–	+2 Str, +2 Wis, 2 wings 1d4, +7 natural armor
12	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Wyrmling, speed 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.
13	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	–	+2 Str, +2 Con, fire breath 3d10, +8 natural armor
14	9d12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Wis, +2 Cha, +9 natural armor
15	10d12	+10/+5	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, +2 Int, fire breath 4d10, +10 natural armor
16	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Very Young, Large size, bite 2d6, claws 1d8, wings 1d6, tail slap 1d8
17	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	–	+2 Str, spells (1st), +11 natural armor
18	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, fire breath 5d10
19	13d12	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, +12 natural armor
20	14d12	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	Young, fire breath 6d10, +13 natural armor

and a cone of *repulsion* gas. At 5th level, the bronze gains its lightning breath. At 9th level, it gains its *repulsion* breath. Creatures within the cone of *repulsion* gas must succeed at a Will save or be compelled to do nothing but move away from the dragon for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon. The effect of the *repulsion* gas is a mind-affecting compulsion enchantment effect.

Spells: A bronze dragon may cast spells from the Animal, Law, and Water domains as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

Alternate Form (Su): The bronze dragon can assume an alternate form once per day at 14th level, twice per day at 16th level, and three times per day at 18th level. The bronze dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself at its caster level, except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in its animal or humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one or return to its natural form.

Copper Dragon

Dragon (Earth)

Copper dragons live in hills and mountains. They appreciate humor, playing pranks, telling jokes, and asking riddles of everyone they meet. For more information about copper dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon.*

Racial Traits

- Starting Ability Score Adjustment: +2 Con.
- Earth Subtype: Copper dragons are comfortable within the confines of stone.
- Tiny: As Tiny creatures, wyrmling copper dragons gain a +2 size bonus to Armor Class, a +2 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +8 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are one-half those of Medium characters. Wyrmling copper dragons have a space of 2 1/2 feet by 2 1/2 feet and a reach of 0 feet, which means they must enter an opponent's square to attack in melee combat and draw an attack of opportunity when doing so.
- Copper dragon base land speed is 20 feet.
- Immunity to Acid: A copper dragon takes no damage from acid.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a copper dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Hide (Dex), and Jump (Str).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the copper dragon monster class.

Feats: A copper dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 8th, 13th, and 16th level.

Spider Climb (Ex): At 2nd-level and thereafter, a copper dragon can climb on stone surfaces as though using the *spider climb* spell.

Breath Weapon (Su): A copper dragon has two types of breath weapon,

a line of acid and a cone of *slow* gas. At 4th level, a copper dragon gains its acid breath. At 7th level, the copper dragon gains its *slow* breath. Creatures within the cone of *slow* gas must succeed at a Fortitude save or be slowed for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon.

Spells: A copper dragon may cast spells from the Chaos, Earth, and Trickery domains as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

Spell Resistance (Ex): At 19th level, the copper dragon gains spell resistance 17.

Gold Dragon

Dragon (Fire)

Wise and just, gold dragons are the most proactive of dragon types in the ever-raging conflict between good and evil. They can live anywhere, but they always make their homes of stone,

DRAGON PCS AND AGE CATEGORIES

Like all other characters, dragon player characters are exceptional members of their race. For dragons—already extremely powerful creatures in their own rights—this means that they advance to higher age categories based not on the passage of years, but by gaining experience. Although a dragon PC starts out as less powerful than a typical dragon wyrmling, a dragon PC can attain the physical and mental abilities of a juvenile dragon while most of his clutch-mates are still wyrmlings.

The rules presented here are an alternative both to the Dragon Age Categories chart given on page 68 of the *Monster Manual*, and the Dragons as Player Characters in chapter 3 of the *Draconomicon*. Many campaigns don't last long enough (in terms of game time) for a dragon PC to grow past the wyrmling age category, thereby making advancement as a dragon in either of those two rule options difficult.

Instead, adapting the rules presented in *Savage Species*, a dragon PC using the dragon monster classes presented here advances to the next age category when it attains a certain class level. Each dragon monster class presents the dragon from 1st to 20th level. A dragon character may not multiclass into a standard character class until it completes the progression of its current age category; it then may return to the dragon class later to gain the next age category.

If your DM wishes to maintain the age categories and the time a dragon needs to attain them, you can still play a dragon from the campaign's starting PC level up to the level before your dragon PC changes age categories.

whether cave or castle. For more information about gold dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

Racial Traits

- Fire Subtype: Gold dragons have immunity to fire. They take half again as much damage (+50%) as normal from cold damage, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, wyrmling gold dragons have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Gold dragon base land speed is 30 feet. They also have a swim speed of 30 feet. Note that having a swim speed gives gold dragons the usual +8 racial bonus on Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard in the water.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a gold dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Disguise (Cha), Heal (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the gold dragon monster class.

Feats: A gold dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 8th, 14th, and 18th level.

Water Breathing (Ex): A gold dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapons, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Breath Weapon (Su): Gold dragons have two types of breath weapon, a cone of fire and a cone of weakening gas. At 4th level, the gold dragon gains its weakening breath. Creatures within the cone of weakening gas must succeed at a Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage per age category of the dragon. At 6th level, a gold dragon gains its fire breath.

Alternate Form (Su): The gold dragon can assume an alternate form once per day at 4th level, twice per day at 7th level, and three times per day at 10th level. The gold dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself at its caster level, except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in its animal or humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one or return to its natural form.

Spells: A gold dragon may cast spells from the Good, Law, and Luck domains as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

SILVER DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) × 4	Feat, bite 1d6, 2 claws 1d4
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	+1 natural armor, alternate form 1/day
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, cloudwalking
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	+2 Con, +2 Int, +2 natural armor
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Cold breath 1d8, speed 30 ft., alternate form 2/day
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	—	+2 Wis, +2 Cha, fly 50 ft. (average), +3 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+4 natural armor, blindsense
8	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, alternate form 3/day
9	6d12	+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	—	+2 Str, +2 Int, cold breath 2d8, +5 natural armor
10	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Paralyzing breath
11	7d12	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	—	Wyrmling, +2 Wis, speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), +6 natural armor
12	8d12	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, cold breath 3d8, +7 natural armor
13	9d12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Con, +8 natural armor, cold breath 4d8
14	10d12	+10/+5	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Very Young, Medium size, bite 1d6, claws 1d4, 2 wings 1d6, fly 150 ft. (poor), +9 natural armor
15	11d12	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, cold breath 5d8
16	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Cha, +10 natural armor
17	12d12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	—	+2 Str, +2 Wis, cold breath 6d8, +11 natural armor
18	13d12	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Young, spells (1st), +12 natural armor
19	14d12	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, *feather fall*, +13 natural armor
20	14d12	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+9	—	+2 Con, +2 Cha, spells (2nd), cold breath 7d8

Silver Dragon

Dragon (Cold)

Silver dragons are the most gregarious of all dragon types. They often spend many years in humanoid form and in the company of humanoids. When not living like humanoids, they prefer lairs high in the sky, such as on mountain peaks. For more information about silver dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

Racial Traits

- Starting Ability Score Adjustment: +2 Cha.
- Cold Subtype: Silver dragons have immunity to cold. They take half again as much damage (+50%) as normal from fire damage, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.
- Small: As Small creatures, wyrmling silver dragons gain a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of Medium characters.
- Silver dragon base land speed is 20 feet.
- Immunity to acid: A silver dragon takes no damage from acid.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a silver dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Disguise (Cha), and Jump (Str).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the silver dragon monster class.

Feats: A silver dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 8th, 13th, and 16th level.

Alternate Form (Su): The silver dragon can assume an alternate form once per day at 2nd level, twice per day at 5th level, and three times per day at 7th level. The silver dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself at its caster level, except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in its animal or humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one or return to its natural form.

Cloudwalking (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, a silver dragon can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground. The ability functions continuously, but can be negated or resumed at will.

Breath Weapon (Su): Silver dragons have two types of breath weapon, a cone of cold and a cone of paralyzing gas. At 5th level it gains its cold breath. At 11th level, the silver dragon gains its paralyzing breath. Creatures within the cone of paralyzing gas must succeed at a Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon.

Spells: A silver dragon may cast spells from the Air, Good, Law, and Sun domains as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

Spell-Like Ability: Beginning at 19th level, the silver dragon can cast *feather fall* twice per day. Caster level equals the dragon's age category (dragons at and below wyrmling level are 1st-level casters, very young dragons are 2nd-level casters, and so on).

FOSTERED

The woman appeared as the sentry had described her: middle-aged and unarmed, with a wool-lined bundle tied to her back. How had she survived the journey to the monastery? How had she even found the path?

"You'll have to forgive our lack of hospitality," Lorim said carefully. "We don't get many visitors here."

The woman said nothing. She stood in the middle of the monastery's sparse dining room, staring at the tapestry that was its only decoration. It depicted a bronze dragon attacking a pirate galleon, while a dozen monks gazed in awe from the deck of a small schooner.

"Do you remember?" she asked, gesturing toward the tapestry.

Lorim frowned. "I had not been born then, but we all know the story of the day Hannafet saved the missionaries."

"Good," she said. "It is time for that debt to be repaid."

A sudden flash of light blinded Lorim's eyes, and he snapped instinctively into his blind-fighting stance. When his vision returned, he fell immediately to his knees, for the woman was gone and in her place was a bronze dragon whose stunning beauty he was unworthy to behold.

He did not look up until he felt the sentry's arm on his shoulder, and when he did, she was gone. Peeking out of the wool bundle she left behind were two dragon eggs, each laced with intricate patterns of bronze.

All dragons care about the survival of their bloodlines, but many lack strong paternal instincts or have reason to fear for the safety of their young. Unburdened by sentiment, dragons might entrust their unwanted or unsafe hatchlings into the care of a chosen member of a lesser race.

Instinctively driven by a lust for knowledge and wealth, these fostered wyrmlings flourish in nondraconic society, and many eagerly take a humanoid form and identity. While the fostered dragons thrive, the people whose lives they touch are rarely so lucky.

by Casey Loe · illustrated by Aaron St. Goddard

DRAGONS
The Perilous Burden

WHY DRAGONS FOSTER THEIR YOUNG

While most dragons obsessively guard the locations of their lairs, centuries of residence rarely go unnoticed. Grown dragons can defend themselves, but when the locations of their lairs have been compromised, their eggs and wyrmlings are put in great peril.

The primary danger comes from rival dragons. Chromatic dragons particularly relish the opportunity to eliminate an enemy in its infancy, and many metallic dragons are not above doing so themselves. Humanoid species rarely attack wyrmlings as a preventive measure, but individual thieves might attempt to steal an egg or kidnap a hatchling for the profit it can bring on the black market. They can be sold at high prices to warriors seeking spectacular mounts, dark cultists who desire to perform terrible sacrifices, and mages who need dragon parts for powerful spells and magic items.

Wyrmlings do not make it easy for their parents to protect them from such dangers. Their insatiable curiosity invariably leads them to wander away from the safety of their lairs, making it difficult for a parent to keep tabs on multiple hatchlings. For this reason, many dragons keep just one hatchling per parent. Chromatic dragons often abandon the additional hatchlings, while metallic dragons are more likely to seek a foster parent. Since dragons are capable of producing hundreds of offspring in their lifetimes, they don't feel the strong emotional attachments to each child that shorter-lived humanoid species do.

Finally, some metallic dragons foster a young wyrmling simply because they were raised among humanoids and found the experience rewarding. This is particularly true of silver dragons, who consider spending a few decades as a humanoid a rite of passage for the young.

RULES FOR REARING A DRAGON

Page 13 of the *Draconomicon* offers rules for fostering wyrmlings, which consists of a Diplomacy or Intimidate check to gain the respect of the newly-hatched wyrmling. However, this check is not necessary if the young wyrmling is ordered by a birth parent to heed the chosen foster parent. Most wyrmlings respect their parents' choice, and the Diplomacy or Intimidate check is only necessary if the wyrmling has a serious disagreement with its tender.

THE WYRMTENDER'S THANKLESS TASK

When a dragon offers its hatchling to a potential foster parent, it is rarely refused. A non-evil dragon usually chooses an individual or organization for whom it has done a favor, so the prospective foster parent will be obliged to accept (which might be why the dragon did the favor in the first place).

Most people are flattered by the request and relish the prospect of an alliance with a dragon, but wyrmtenders who expect to be rewarded for their sacrifice usually end up disappointed. For protection, dragons do not visit their fostered young, and the tender is usually instructed never to seek out the parent. By the time the wyrmling is mature enough to realize the debt it owes its foster parent (if it ever does), the tender will likely be dead of natural causes. A particularly dutiful dragon might protect the descendants of a beloved foster parent, but the original foster parents rarely see any benefits from the relationship. Certain classes might be able to convince their foster wyrmlings to serve them as a steed or cohort, but this requires a difficult Diplomacy check that ends in failure more often than not (see page 138 of the *Draconomicon* for details).

Sometimes dragons foster their young to a community, like a church, a school, an order of knights, or even a government. This gives the young the benefits of having many mentors to learn from, and possibly the protection of a small army. A long-standing organization is also more likely to be rewarded for its sacrifice, as the grown dragon might act as a patron or protector for generations of future members. The downside is that the identity and whereabouts of a dragon fostered to a group are much harder to conceal, and the task might come into conflict with an organization's higher purpose.

DRACONIC COHORTS

PCs can choose dragons as cohorts. A dragon raised by an individual who gives it enough freedom to sate its curiosity but maintains enough discipline to keep it respectful of its tender has a good chance of gaining that dragon as a cohort. Naturally, the tender must have a Leadership score high enough for the draconic cohort. There is more information about this in Chapter 3 of the *Draconomicon*.

Dragon	Alignment	ECL*	Minimum Leadership Score
White (wyrmling)	CE	5	7
Brass (wyrmling)	CG	6	9
Black (wyrmling)	CE	7	10
Copper (wyrmling)	CG	7	10
White (very young)	CE	9	13
Black (very young)	CE	10	14
Blue (wyrmling)	LE	10	14
Brass (very young)	CG	10	14
Bronze (wyrmling)	LG	10	14
Green (wyrmling)	LE	10	14
Copper (very young)	CG	11	16
Red (wyrmling)	CE	11	16
Silver (wyrmling)	LG	11	16
Gold (wyrmling)	LG	12	17
White (young)	CE	12	17
Black (young)	CE	13	19
Blue (very young)	LE	13	19
Bronze (very young)	LG	13	19
Green (very young)	LE	13	19
Brass (young)	CG	14	20
Silver (very young)	LG	14	20
Copper (young)	CG	15	21
Red (very young)	CE	15	21
Gold (very young)	LG	16	23
Green (young)	LE	16	23
Black (juvenile)	CE	17	24
Blue (young)	LE	17	24
Brass (juvenile)	CG	17	24
White (juvenile)†	CE	17	24
Bronze (young)	LG	18	25**
Copper (juvenile)	CG	18	25**
Silver (young)	LG	18	25**
Red (young)	CE	19	26**
Gold (young)	LG	20	27**
Green (juvenile)	LE	20	27**

*Effective Character Level.

**The Dragon Cohort feat is needed to gain a dragon cohort of this power.

CHROMATIC DELINQUENTS

Chromatic dragons rarely foster their young, but some find it preferable to the abandonment of extra hatchlings. Chromatic dragons are suspicious of anyone who would voluntarily take in an evil dragon hatchling, wary that they would attempt to dominate the wyrmling for their own vile purposes. Thus, the parents usually approach a prospect with promises of treasure (that never actually materializes, of course), or a favor (such as the elimination of a foe). The parent might also threaten to kill the tender if the wyrmling is mistreated, although in most cases he or she won't bother checking in again.

Those foolish enough to take in a chromatic wyrmling invariably regret it—if they survive. Few who truly understand the wyrmling's depravity accept the task at any price. Chromatic wyrmlings might attempt to kill anyone with whom they share their mentors' attention, including the tender's mate and other children, and they are quite skilled at making the deaths seem accidental. Like metallic wyrmlings, they have a powerful thirst for knowledge and ingratiate themselves to anyone whom they feel has something to teach. As they grow older and prouder, they begin to harbor deep resentment toward both teachers and foster parents. When the wyrmling feels it has learned all it can, its close mentors and authority figures are often stricken by suspicious "accidents" themselves.

Since chromatic dragons have no inherent shapechanging abilities, most aren't capable of taking humanoid form without magical assistance. Many are raised entirely in wyrmling form by their foster parent or community, but some dragons lock their hatchlings into a humanoid form with a *polymorph any object* spell before they foster the child. Particularly nefarious chromatic dragons might disguise themselves and their hatchlings as gold or silver dragons before they seek out a prospective foster parent.

THE TEMPERAMENT OF HATCHLINGS

Although born with a vast reserve of knowledge inherited from their parents, dragons are not able to access it all from the moment of their hatchings. Most dragons can fly, fight, and strategize at only a few hours of age, but it takes months for a young dragon to master communication skills and make sense of its environment, especially if it is surrounded by members of another species.

Even without a teacher, a wyrmling masters its hunting techniques and survival skills within its first year of life. A dragon learns Draconic innately, but it cannot learn Common or any other language without exposure to it. If a wyrmling has access to books, it eventually deciphers them and learns to read the languages in which they're written. Without a teacher, the superior intellect of a young dragon is restricted to logic-driven pursuits like mathematics and strategy.

Fostered wyrmlings are capable of learning far more than their feral cousins. When raised by humanoids who are willing to teach, wyrmlings develop a burning desire to absorb the entire sum of humanoid knowledge. In their first few months of life, hatchlings concentrate on language acquisition and can learn any humanoid language simply by hearing it spoken frequently. Once they are able to converse, hatchlings begin pestering potential teachers with endless strings of questions about the natural world. Wise foster parents divert their wyrmlings' attention by teaching them to read (something a hatchling should be capable of at only a few weeks of age), and letting their students absorb every book available. A hatchling who has access to a library should have a level of knowledge comparable to that of a well-educated person by its second birthday.

THE WYRMLING TAKES A PERSONA

Gold and silver dragons learn enough about humanoids to polymorph into a convincing humanoid using their alternate form ability within a few months of age. Wild bronze dragons don't develop their shapechanging abilities until later in life.

Fostered wyrmlings who can take humanoid form (or have *polymorph any object* cast upon them) usually prioritize developing their humanoid identities instead of honing their draconic abilities. These fostered dragons spend most of their time in their chosen humanoid form and seek training in a class. Young dragons disdain most humanoid occupations and show little interest or aptitude in learning crafts, farming, or merchant trades. Instead, fostered dragons show a keen interest in martial training, thievery, and magic. Since they tend to be too independent and arrogant to tolerate highly structured environments, tenders would be wise to apprentice them to a patient warrior, rogue, or mage instead of enrolling them in a training academy. Many fostered dragons, impatient and curious about the roads not taken, bounce from class to class, picking up no more than a few levels in each. A few temper their capriciousness with a strong desire to achieve greatness and might pursue a single calling for decades. Even if a fostered dragon does manage this level of focus, it maintains an interest in other topics as it pursues its chosen class.

THE PERILS OF WYRMLING GREED

Knowledge, alas, is not a wyrmling's only passion. Hatchlings instinctually begin hording shiny stones even before they can speak, and their lust for treasure only grows more refined as they age. Like a dog who drops his bone in a lake while trying to seize the bone's reflection, a wyrmling dragon's greed supercedes its intelligence and invariably gets it in trouble. Even lawful good dragons often resort to blatant thievery in their first few years of life.

This leads to no end of trouble for their tenders, who must protect their own belongings, attempt to stifle their charges' covetous impulses, and keep them from running afoul of the law. Many young wyrmlings are fascinated by rogues and their treasure-acquiring skills, and it is only due to the diligence of their tenders that most wyrmlings are prevented from pursuing the vocation of thievery.

DRAGON COHORT [GENERAL]

You gain the service of a loyal dragon ally.

Prerequisites: Character level 9th, Speak Language (Draconic).

Benefit: You gain a cohort selected from the Draconic Cohorts table, just as you would by selecting the Leadership feat. However, you may treat the dragon's ECL as if it were 3 lower than indicated.

This feat is reprinted from page 104 of the *Draconomicon*.

UNLEASHED IN A DANGEROUS WORLD

Keeping a wyrmling's hands out of strangers' pockets might be a full-time job for many tenders, but it's a simple one compared to the task of hiding a fostered dragon's true identity. Most tenders keep their wyrmlings well hidden for the first year or so, but concealing a curious wyrmling beyond that is nearly impossible, especially if the wyrmling feels it has already learned all that it can from its foster parents. Driven by a strong desire to advance its humanoid persona and a false sense of confidence in its ability to travel undetected, a young fostered dragon might consider escaping from even highly respected foster parents. A tender who does not relent and allow the wyrmling to explore its world risks losing control over it entirely.

Despite the quality of its alternate form, the behavior of a disguised foster dragon often hints at its true identity. Not many people are aware that fostered dragons walk among them, but the ones who seek to prey upon them (agents of enemy dragons, for example) rarely miss the signs. These include an extremely inquisitive nature, an inappropriate habit of begging for gold and treasures, a great knowledge of arcane matters coupled with conspicuous ignorance of humanoid behavior, and physical and magical abilities far beyond the capabilities of a preteen humanoid (as most young fostered dragons appear to be).

For these reasons, most tenders are forced to lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle for a few years, moving from town to town before anyone can become suspicious of their strange children. The fostered dragon, however, is con-

stantly on the lookout for new mentors with new skills to teach. If the tender refuses a fostered dragon's request to travel with a particularly enticing adventurer, he or she might have to make a Diplomacy or Intimidate check to avoid being abandoned by his or her young ward. If the fostered dragon chooses poorly (and most are notoriously bad judges of character at this age), its identity might be discovered and spread as a rumor that ultimately leads to its death or enslavement.

THE DRAGON'S UNCERTAIN FATE

Some wyrmlings do form long-term bonds with their tenders and won't stray from their sides for long. Most are driven by curiosity to a life of adventure long before they are physically and mentally ready. Some tenders give up their duties when abandoned by their fostered dragons; others doggedly pursue them and continue to protect them in any way they can.

No one knows how many fostered dragons survive those first few years of independence, but those who do become skilled at living among humanoids without arousing suspicion and learn how to distinguish between potentially trustworthy companions and those who would seek to exploit them. At age six, a wyrmling is officially considered a very young dragon and is capable of protecting itself from most common threats. If the tender is still in the picture, this is the point at which he or she likely realizes that the fostering task is done.

Most fostered dragons continue their journeys as humanoids for at least another decade, and some (including almost all silver dragons) decide to continue for a humanoid lifetime before taking a lair and beginning a more traditional dragon life. If a dragon has come to respect its tender, and he leads a suitably exciting life, a fostered dragon may continue to adventure with its tender until his death.

Older dragons might regard their fostering experiences as the foolishness of youth, but few ever regret them. Indeed, they are often among the dragon's fondest memories, and some great wyrms wistfully consider the minor treasures gathered in that period to be the crown jewels of their massive treasure hordes.

ATTITUDES TOWARD FOSTERING

While all dragons have the capability to either convince or force humanoids to care for their young, not all dragon types are inclined to do so. The following explains how each dragon type approaches fostering.

Black Dragons

Black dragons lack their red cousins' sense of cruel whimsy, and on the rare occasions that they foster a wyrmling, it is always to a lawful evil individual or organization of great power. Common tenders include dragon-worshipping cults, high-level evil dracolytes (see page 122 of the the *Draconomicon*), and churches or monasteries devoted to Tiamat, goddess of evil dragons. Black wyrmlings are no less vicious than red wyrmlings, but their tenders are usually better prepared for their treachery and powerful enough to cow them into submission.

Blue Dragons

When forced to give up an egg or a wyrmling to fostering, blue dragons always search for other lawfully minded desert dwellers. They favor efreet as tenders above all others, but they will use desert nomads or even gynosphinxes when no other option presents itself. As perhaps the most caring parents of the chromatics, blue dragon parents check in on their offspring whenever possible. Like their parents, blue wyrmlings are vain and lazy.

Brass Dragons

Because they love good conversation above all else, brass dragon parents typically deposit their offspring with those whose company they most enjoy. Brass dragon wyrmlings are born with the gift of gab, and within a few hours of hatching, they are ready to learn the language of their tenders and as many other languages as they can. After a few weeks, the wyrmling's constant chatter begins to wear on even the most patient tenders, and they are introduced to others who live near the tender in order to provide the wyrmling with more conversation partners.

Bronze Dragons

Young bronze dragons are less interested in intellectual matters than other dragons and are instead consumed by wanderlust. Many are fostered to traveling merchants, ship captains, explorers, or even traveling carnivals, so that the bronze wyrmling's natural inquisitiveness and intense wanderlust can be sated while remaining as long as possible with its tender. This wanderlust leads some to careers as bards, a vocation that puts their natural charisma and empathy to

excellent use. Bronze dragons also savor physical combat, and many find satisfying lives as mercenaries or adventurers in their youth.

Copper Dragons

Free-wheeling and capricious, copper dragons sometimes leave their young with a humanoid they know as a grand, ongoing prank. They rarely regret the decision, and they often return to a tender in disguise to check on their offspring. Wyrmling coppers tell lots of jokes that occasionally venture into the territory of lies. As the months begin to pass, they start to play pranks on their tenders and others around them. While their jokes and pranks are always done with humorous intentions, sometimes their careless natures can cause trouble or pain for their tenders.

Gold Dragons

Adult gold dragons are paragons of virtue, but their wyrmlings often find themselves in moral conflicts. Gold fostered dragons often become consumed with the idea of battling injustice, but their youthful naivete leads them into conflicts they cannot win with corrupt leaders or criminal organizations. Despite their righteousness, gold fostered dragons are very greedy, and they often form elaborate justifications to hide their own thievery and opportunism.

Green Dragons

When green dragons foster their offspring, it's often to lizardfolk or kobolds. Unlike most dragons, a green dragon often checks in on its fostered children, both to ensure the compliance of the foster parents and to ensure that its offspring is removed from its territory before it grows old enough to present a threat.

Red Dragons

Red dragons are the only chromatic dragons that regularly foster their young, but they rarely choose willing foster parents, preferring to coerce or trick innocents who are unlikely to survive the experience. Indeed, the survival of the wyrmling often seems to be a secondary concern compared to the amusement it can bring to its birth parent. Malicious reds want to see their offspring betray a vainglorious mage who seeks a wyrmling for a familiar, lay waste to a town that doesn't dare refuse the "honor" of fostering a dragon, or surprise an unsuspecting paladin who didn't notice the magical disguise and thinks he's raising a brass dragon.

Silver Dragons

Silver wyrmlings are the most common fostered dragons, since adult silver dragons feel very comfortable in humanoid form and usually have close humanoid friends willing to foster their children. Silver fostered dragons typically revert to their dragon forms only in dire emergencies, and they are very secretive about their true natures. As wyrmlings, most silver fostered dragons have little interest in the solitary lives of their kin and often fantasize about abandoning their heritage and living a series of humanoid lives instead. Their attitudes change as they age, but most silver dragons spend at least one full humanoid lifetime with a humanoid race.

White Dragons

Feral and relatively stupid (for dragons anyway) white dragons rarely willingly or knowingly foster a hatchling. Generally, a white dragon egg falls into the hands of another race by accident, typically as a result of its parents' neglect or death. White wyrmlings are among the most dangerous to care for, as they are capable carnivores and hunters within a few weeks of birth. Tenders who survive a wyrmling compare them to tigers, wolves, or other powerful predators . . . but with far more cunning.

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DRAGON

by Mike Mearls · illustrated by Dave McClellan

KING

Doms

The Ways Dragons Rule

Dragons are among the most potent creatures in Dungeons & Dragons. Their thick scales can turn aside swords and arrows, while their mighty breath weapons can annihilate entire legions. They master a variety of spells and develop special qualities that make them overwhelming foes in their native terrain. While dragons are physically imposing, their greatest assets are their brilliant intellects and strong personalities. This article looks at the place of dragons in a campaign world from a political, economic, and social perspective, building on the background presented in the *Draconomicon*.

The Draconic View

To understand dragons' goals and plans, it is first important to see how they think and how they view the world. By virtue of their long lives, great power, and unique racial characteristics, dragons have a distinct outlook on life that shorter-lived races rarely understand.

Memory of Ages: The most important factor to consider when discussing dragons is their great longevity. Dragons might attack realms based on wrongs committed decades or even centuries ago, as they have trouble looking at things from the limited view of humans and other relatively short-lived creatures. To a dragon, the events of a century ago have the same immediacy that the last month holds to a human. Dragons live for thousands of years, with the white dragon's 2,100 years being the shortest lifespan. To put things into perspective, a single year to a human who lives to see 80 is the equivalent of about 40 years to a dragon. If a 3,000-year-old silver dragon were alive on Earth today, she would think about the Roman Empire as a powerful country from her youth. She might have personally known Julius Caesar. She would see World War I as a brief tussle that, when you look at her life span in human terms, lasted all of four or five weeks.

Dragons might attack realms based on wrongs committed centuries ago.

For this reason, dragons have a notoriously difficult time looking at things from a human perspective. They prefer to view things in the long term, addressing problems over decades rather than months or years. Evil dragons concoct plans that might require centuries to come to fruition. Good dragons have noble intentions, but they might not act with the sense of urgency that an elven or human realm requires.

Arrogance: As dragons live for centuries and have the power to take on entire armies alone, it should come as no surprise that they are among the most arrogant creatures in the world. Their natural arrogance might cause them either to ignore humanoid concerns or to cause more problems than they solve. A good dragon might insist that its view of law and good be written into a neighboring realm's laws, especially if it had to intervene on a kingdom's behalf during a crisis.

Part of draconic arrogance can also be their complete disregard for "lesser" races. Two dragons could duel over a city, spreading destruction as they throw spells and blast each other with their breath weapons, completely oblivious to the carnage raining down on the humans below. In their view, a few smashed buildings are no more an annoyance than a broken window, and the months it takes to replace a structure are the equivalent of a few days' work.

The natural draconic tendency toward arrogance provides an excellent explanation for why good dragons do not take a more active role in the world. These creatures tend to reserve their efforts for major wars and cataclysmic events. A planar rift that threatens to consume the planet draws out the good dragons' aid, but a simple gate that allows xills to maraud the countryside lies beneath their notice.

Draconic Assets

In addition to the common personality and biological traits that give them a distinct point of view, dragons also have a unique approach to personal wealth, family, and social relationships.

The Ties That Bind: While many DMs present dragons as lone, isolated monsters, dragons establish a number of important ties to others of their kind as they age. Slaying one might draw the ire of a mightier foe, whether it be the dragon's parents, a trusted tutor, or its mate. Since dragons take things slowly, as befits a long-lived race, they might put off their retaliation for years. The characters could face enemies at 17th level that they unwittingly made when they defeated a dragon at 4th level.

If multiple dragons exist in the same region, they invariably come into competition for the area's wealth. Unless one dragon serves the other or if the dragons are mates, they rarely co-exist peacefully for long. Dragons are highly territorial in regards to one another. The two creatures could duel with each other, but if both are powerful and control many allies, they could fight an indirect war. The economy of an entire region could grind to a halt due to a war between two dragons, as each dragon's army of servants raids and pillages within the disputed territory.

Draconic Families: Since dragons can breed with almost any creature, they can find an eager body of followers and allies among their offspring. Some dragons purposefully seek out creatures that prove useful mates, using them to produce children powerful enough to serve as guardians and allies but not so strong as to threaten their plans. A legion of loyal and mighty, but not too powerful, followers can prove useful as emissaries and overseers. While an evil dragon might mate to spawn guards for its lairs or a champion who can seize control of a humanoid tribe, a good dragon rarely, if ever, approaches such concerns with the same cold calculation. Good dragons tend to develop emotional, although not necessarily lasting, bonds with their nondraconic mates.

Occasionally, a dragon gives up an egg to be raised by a nondragon foster parent. See the "Fostering Dragons" article in this issue for more information.

Hoards of Treasure: Dragons have the time and resources to seek magic items that are particularly useful to them. Of all the creatures that the PCs might face, a dragon is the most likely to have items chosen specifically for their utility. Dragons greatly value items that mask their weaknesses, such as *rings of energy resistance*. Dragons also value items that allow them to peer beyond the confines of their lairs. A *crystal ball* or similar item allows it to keep tabs on its enemies and allies. The more active a

dragon is in a region, the more highly it values items that allow it to cast divination spells. By the same token, many dragons keep magic items that allow them to evade detection, such as an *amulet of proof against detection and location.*

DRACONIC SCHEMES

While dragons' unique perspectives, goals, and tools give them shared characteristics, the different dragon types display unique tendencies in how they go about seizing political and economic power. This section addresses each of the chromatic and metallic dragon types and explains how they impose their particular influence upon the world.

Black Dragons: With their preference for watery swamps and bogs, black dragons can become powerful gatekeepers in regional trade routes. A black dragon might gather swamp dwelling creatures under its control, such as lizardfolk, and dispatch them to dam waterways, clog others with debris, and leave only a single, watery route available for travelers. The dragon then lurks on this pathway, extorting tribute from travelers in return for safe passage. The wyrm might even personally inspect cargoes for particularly appealing trinkets, seizing any items that catch its fancy. In this manner, a black dragon can come to control some of the most important routes through an area.

Neighboring realms face a doubly vexing problem. Not only is the dragon a daunting foe, but the swamp it inhabits makes sending an expedition to attack it all the more dangerous. Relatively safe in its boggy realm, the dragon could sire half-dragon lizardfolk to serve as its emissaries, perhaps offering favorable tolls to realms that offer it tribute or who work against the guilds and kingdoms that oppose its control of the land. The dragon might never achieve an official title, but it remains a potent figure in the region.

Blue Dragons: As lawful creatures, blue dragons have a natural tendency to form a clear, rigid pecking order, making them doubly dangerous enemies. Blue dragons are the most likely chromatic dragons to work together toward a common goal, forming mighty alliances. In their desert environments, they prefer to seize control of water resources and use them as tools to demand tribute and loyalty from the creatures of the region. Working in concert, blue dragons might watch over oases and lakes, swooping in to drive off creatures that fail to offer them bribes of gold and gems. The dragons take great pains to destroy any potential resistance, focusing on druids and clerics as priority targets, as the spell *create water* can undermine their monopoly. By rationing water, blue dragons easily gain control of humanoid tribes, supporting weak-willed and easily cowed chieftains. With control of the desert secured, blue dragons rarely seek other conquests. Instead, they might make their servants' access to water contingent on raids and great offerings of treasure, forcing even good-aligned desert folk to attack their neighbors and caravans.

Brass Dragons: These dragons rarely become political or economic figures in the desert regions they inhabit.

Their love of conversation and respect for the desert environment makes them unlikely conquerors. Rather, they are fonts of knowledge and rumors. The dragon's power, the respect it earns, and its loquacious nature allows a brass dragon to learn much about the land around it. These dragons make an effort to stop any caravans or travelers in their territories, speaking with them at length and grilling them tirelessly for news of the outside world.

Of all the good dragons, bronzes are most likely to heed a call to war.

Combined with their sharp intellects, this steady stream of news and rumors makes brass dragons valued as advisors and informants. They offer their services to those who can pay them in the materials they desire for their hoards, primarily rich tapestries, beautifully crafted wooden goods, and other art objects. A brass dragon might go out of its way to spread rumors of its knowledge, sometimes even offering false hints that it can help with a pressing problem. The dragon's perspective on current events is usually distorted by its arrogance and ponderous sense of time. A war might seem to be a minor event to it, so it has no trouble making false claims that it can offer critical advice to seekers in return for a few luxury goods. Still, brass dragons have enough contact with others and are smart enough to offer useful counsel. With their position as a trusted oracle cemented, brass dragons can use subtle hints and advice to push the development of the region in directions they want. Being so long lived, these dragons can afford to plot for decades to help develop an important trade route to a city that specializes in tapestries, carpets, and other goods it desires.

Bronze Dragons: Heroic, inquisitive, and curious, bronze dragons are likely to feel a strong sense of attachment and dominion over their territories. This tendency can sometimes lead to conflicts with humanoid nations, although bronze dragons are respectful enough of other creatures that they can peacefully coexist with their neighbors. The bronze dragon's drive to purge the waves of pirates, sea monsters, and other threats causes it to take an active role in policing its domain, aiding travelers and guarding them from predators and other dangers. However, this can lead to friction as a dragon exerts more control over the sea-lanes than some travelers are comfortable with. A dragon might forbid a nation from sailing its fleets across its waters if the wyrm feels that an impending war will be too costly for the region or the conflict has its roots in immoral or foolish thinking. Thus, while bronze dragons rarely establish themselves as formal rulers or political figures, their influence is impressed upon anyone who wants to travel through their territories. Compounding matters is the bronze dragons' sense of justice and their fascination with warfare. Human realms frequently court bronze dragons' goodwill in hopes of gaining them as valued allies in times of war. Of all the good dragons, bronzes are the ones most likely to heed a call to arms.

Copper Dragons: Talkative and social, copper dragons are the most likely of all dragons to form close, social bonds with other creatures. Their inherent distaste for combat makes them unlikely to become military threats, but the friendship of a dragon is always a useful tool. Thus, a copper dragon's neighbors might actively court an alliance with it. These dragons' love of conversation and attention makes them easily swayed by fine company and friendly hosts. Copper dragons might make social calls on important and powerful figures in the region, trading stories and recent news over dinner. A copper dragon loves to feel important, dining with kings, bishops, and powerful merchant princes at every opportunity. The dragon's social calendar might be an important barometer of a person's place in the political pecking order, driving politicians and nobles to seek out audiences with the dragon. For their part, copper dragons take full advantage of the situation, exulting in their fame and popularity and wallowing in the opportunity to show off their majesty to humanoids and other "lesser" creatures. In terms of power and influence, copper dragons are unparalleled in their ability to win social standing within humanoid lands. With a few words, the dragon can make or break a person's reputation as he has access to the most powerful people in the land. Thus, copper dragons can exert tremendous influence on social and economic policies.

Gold Dragons: Due to their sense of order, strident opposition of all evil, and moral certainty, gold dragons are the most likely of their metallic kin to take an active, political role in the world around them. A gold dragon might go so far as to claim dominion over an area in chaos, uniting good races under its rule to drive off evil creatures and form a lawful, just, and organized government. While gold dragons rarely assume direct rulership for long, they usually leave a clause in a new nation's compact that allows them to intercede and assume total control in times of crisis. In any event, a gold dragon at the very least reserves the right to remove a monarch or government that grows too chaotic or immoral for the dragon's taste. Unfortunately for those who dwell within a dragon's lands, a gold can sometimes allow its sense of morality to trump more practical concerns, pushing it to regularly seize power for brief times to make what it sees as necessary changes to the law. These disruptions might keep the peace in the long term, but they can put the land into turmoil for years. Their arrogance leads gold dragons to rarely consider the moral viewpoints of "lesser" creatures.

Green Dragons: The most politically ambitious of all dragons, greens are likely to extend their influence far beyond their woodland homes. Most of these dragons establish a base of power by forcing the creatures of their forests

into slavery through force and intimidation. When dealing with powerful groups and individuals, their scheming political minds come to the fore. Green dragons sometimes offer alliances to powerful humanoid groups, joining them to crush and enslave their enemies. Using spells such as *dominate person* and bribes of gold and jewels, they cement themselves as rulers of their forest territories. With their position established, their lawful natures take hold and drive them to organize their minions in patrols who sweep the land for forgotten caches, beasts to enslave or kill, and caravans and travelers to rob.

Once a green dragon is in firm control of its territory, it sets its sights on the surrounding lands. It dispatches agents to make contact with cults, criminals, and others who chafe under the rule of good monarchs, giving these groups funds and military support in their covert struggles, weakening a land from within. With their longevity, green dragons are content to set into motion plans that take decades or centuries to come to fruition. The dragon might slowly provide support to its allies, allowing them to grow strong without drawing attention to themselves. Once these groups are powerful enough and their loyalty guaranteed, the green dragon unleashes them. They rise up in revolt, assassinating key figures, stirring popular resentment into rebellion, and agitating for change. As internal pressure rends and tears at the nation, the dragon strikes, using the tribes and monsters it brought into its service. After a successful coup, a green dragon might grow to become a powerful monarch. Usually, the dragon is content to allow regents to handle the day-to-day matters of state, but during the first century of its rule, a green dragon often takes a direct and personal interest in governance. Once in power, a green dragon is far from a warmongering tyrant. Instead, it does its best to allay its neighbors' fears. It might forge trade pacts, military alliances, and other treaties to solidify its position, all while plotting its next conquest and allowing its neighbors to grow complacent.

Red Dragons: The greediest and most ferocious of the chromatic dragons, these beasts rarely sully themselves with the political and social concerns of lesser creatures. Instead, a red dragon is likely to see humanoids as a useful resource on par with a cozy cave. Their greed compels them to conquer and loot wealthy holds, cities, and towns near their domains, provided they are confident that they can defeat the humanoid guardians. A red dragon might question travelers it captures before devouring them, demanding information and rumors about recently unearthed treasures, prosperous trade outposts, rich settlements, or burgeoning trade routes. Armed with this information, a red dragon strikes out to enrich its hoard.

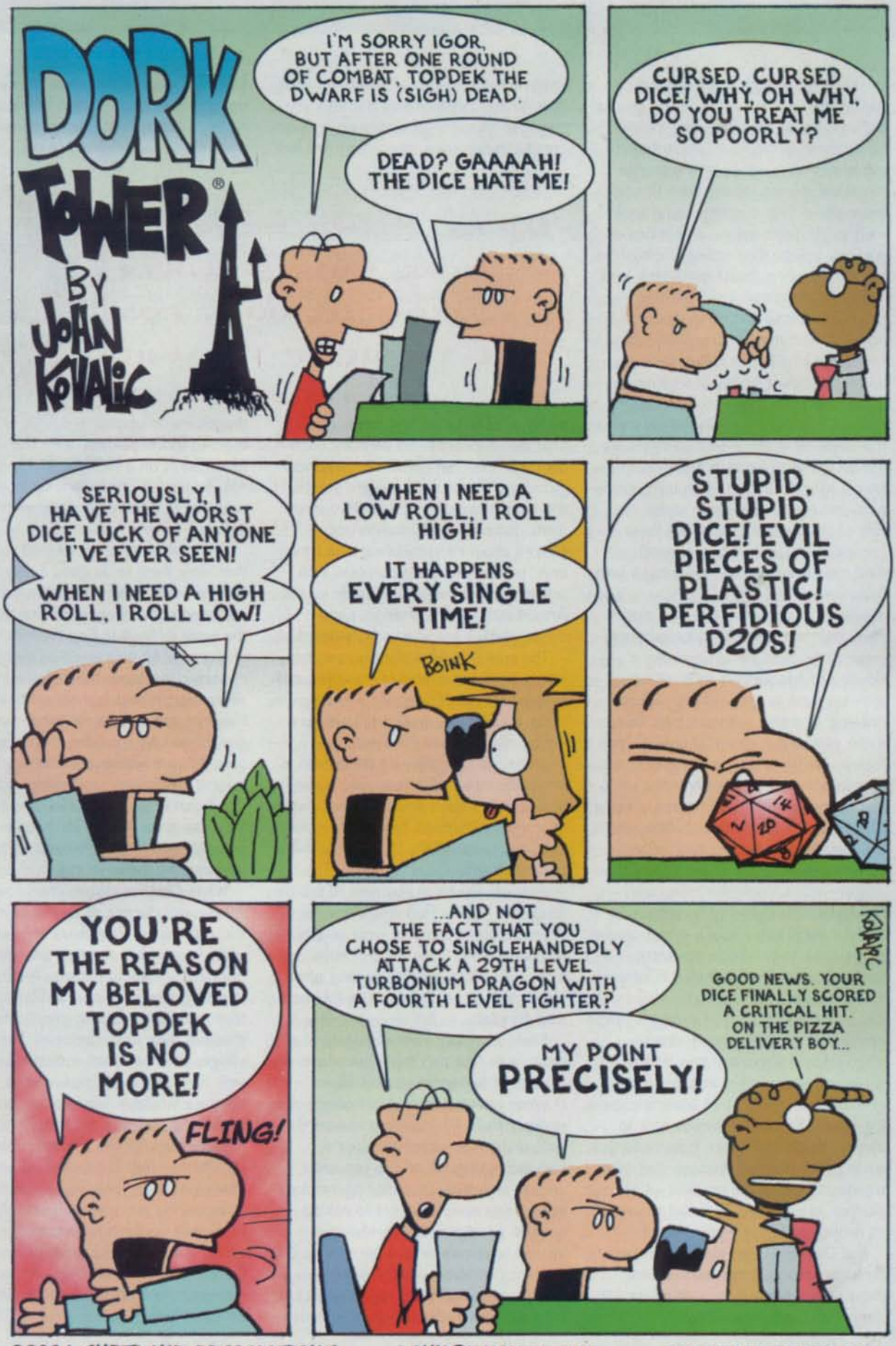
The area around a red dragon's lair slowly becomes devoid of travelers and settlements out of fear of its routine raids. Usually, the dragon follows up a period of intense activity with long stretches of rest, allowing its domain to slowly recover. When possible, a red dragon might seize and enslave a dwarf or gnome settlement, forcing the inhabitants to create finished goods and mine precious metals from the earth. The dragon usually holds hostages to ensure its slaves' loyalty. Red dragons sometimes dominate tribes of orcs or other humanoids, but these beings prove more difficult to control, as they often allow captives to die in return for their own freedom.

Silver Dragons: The most likely of all dragons to take part in the mundane aspects of humanoid society, silver dragons have a sense of immediacy and urgency that other dragons can sorely lack. Using their ability to adopt a humanoid guise, silver dragons enter society as active, crusading agents for good. They make an effort to remain beneath popular notice, preferring instead to remain behind the scenes. This tendency combines with the dragon's reluctance to share the secret of its true nature to make silver dragons a hidden force for good in the world. A silver dragon might donate small but noticeable sums of money to a favored temple while aiding in the church's goals. As the dragon earns respect and trust, it ascends in the political hierarchy, but it never takes on a flashy or noteworthy role. Instead, it offers wise counsel and solutions that solve problems with a minimum of trouble.

> While other dragons take slaves, white dragons hunt for the thrill of the kill.

Other silver dragons take on roles that allow them to do good among the common folk. Due to this influence, evil cults and criminal organizations find it all the more difficult to find recruits. By giving hope to the targets of such opportunistic, black-hearted groups, the silver dragon chokes them off before they can grow powerful. When such groups do take root, the dragon might pass discreet warnings to the city's clerics and governors, setting into motion the defeat of countless evil cabals before they can grow mighty. In this manner, a silver dragon subtly manipulates society to purge the threat of evil.

White Dragons: White dragons rarely enjoy any influence or power beyond that offered by their claws and fangs. In many ways, white dragons are natural disasters waiting to happen. A caravan might fight one off, only to find that they have angered it so greatly that it shadows their steps and annihilates the villages that they stop at to trade. Most wise folk keep away from a white dragon's territory. While other dragons might take slaves or accept bribes, white dragons hunt for the sheer thrill of the kill. On the other hand, their sometimes dim minds make them vulnerable to manipulation and control by others. Many evil warlords have managed to secretly manipulate a white dragon. Once the wyrm is defeated, the warlord sweeps in with his legions to finish off a battered foe.


DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
I'M SORRY IGOR, BUT AFTER ONE ROUND OF COMBAT, TOPDEK THE DWARF IS (SIGH) DEAD.
DEAD? GAAAAH! THE DICE HATE ME!
CURSED, CURSED DICE! WHY, OH WHY, DO YOU TREAT ME SO POORLY?
SERIOUSLY, I HAVE THE WORST DICE LUCK OF ANYONE I'VE EVER SEEN!
WHEN I NEED A HIGH ROLL, I ROLL LOW!
WHEN I NEED A LOW ROLL, I ROLL HIGH!
IT HAPPENS EVERY SINGLE TIME!
BOINK
STUPID, STUPID DICE! EVIL PIECES OF PLASTIC! PERFIDIOUS D20S!
YOU'RE THE REASON MY BELOVED TOPDEK IS NO MORE!
FLING!
...AND NOT THE FACT THAT YOU CHOSE TO SINGLEHANDEDLY ATTACK A 29TH LEVEL TURBONIUM DRAGON WITH A FOURTH LEVEL FIGHTER?
MY POINT PRECISELY!
GOOD NEWS. YOUR DICE FINALLY SCORED A CRITICAL HIT. ON THE PIZZA DELIVERY BOY...
KOVARC

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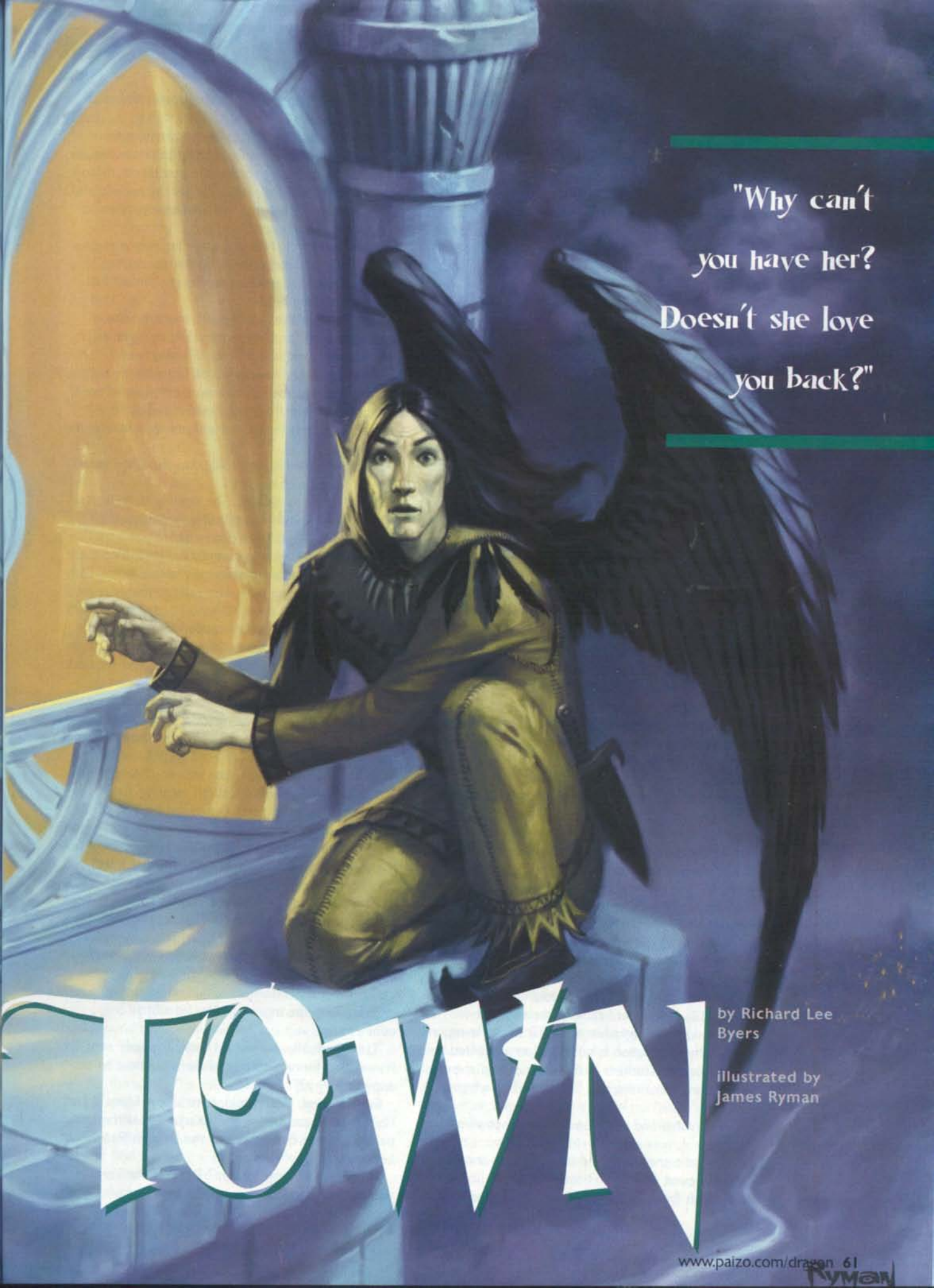

TOWN

by Richard Lee Byers

illustrated by James Ryman

Taegan Nightwind thought the golden-haired human woman was the most beautiful female he had ever seen. Her features and curves possessed a fleshiness that other winged elves might have found coarse but which struck him as rich and voluptuous. The vivid paint on her face, her gauzy garments with their flashing spangles, and the strange, sweet scent surrounding her made her seem a deva descended from some higher plane. However, the most wonderful thing about her was her smile.

The avariel hadn't received many smiles since reaching Calaunt. He'd fled his reclusive forest-dwelling tribe to find a grander, more exciting life in the civilized human world. Upon first inspection, the port with its lofty slate-roofed spires, teeming bazaars, and bustling docks had fulfilled his highest expectations. Even the countless reeking tanneries seemed marvelous in their size and scurrying industry. Gradually, however, it had come to him that he had no idea how to make his way in this unfamiliar environment. He didn't even know how to feed himself—he'd gleaned that he was supposed to trade "coin" for food, but how did one acquire the coin? None of the busy city folk had proved willing to answer a bewildered stranger's questions. They sneered and turned away, or mocked his ignorance.

The woman, however, seemed intrigued by him. "Aren't you a pretty thing," she said, looking him up and down. "I've never seen one like you."

"There aren't many," he said. Nearly extinct, the few remaining avariels only survived by hiding from danger in the heart of the wilderness, or so his father had taught him.

"I've never even had a normal elf," she said, "let alone one of your sort." She stroked his wing with her fingertips. The unexpected caress made him catch his breath. "If Olma gives you a taste—for free—will you give me one of your shiny black feathers, to tickle me after you're gone?"

Could she really mean what she seemed to mean? Flustered, he said, "I . . . I'll gladly give you a feather if you'll help me. I don't understand how things work here, and I'm hungry."

Olma laughed. "You drive a hard bargain, sweetness. But all right, I'll buy you a bowl of stew first. I want you at full strength."

She took his hand and led him down a shadowy alley, a path free of the crowds that choked so many of Calaunt's streets. His heart pounded with excitement. Still, years spent ranging through the Earthwood had taught him the habit of alertness, and despite the distraction his companion presented, he abruptly sensed lurkers in the darkness up ahead.

He drew Olma to a halt. "Hold on," he whispered. "I think—"

She pivoted and tossed a handful of powder into his face.

At once a sneeze racked him and then another. Doubled over, he couldn't seem to inhale, just expel the breath from his lungs. Olma yanked free of his grip, and men lunged out of the shadows to batter him with clubs.

He fumbled out his flint knife, and someone knocked it from his hand. Struggling to recite one of his spells, the sneezing spoiled the precise rhythm required to trigger the magic. He spread his pinions to fly away, and a blow to the head knocked him to the ground instead.

It came to him that he was quite possibly going to die. Certainly, if his assailants wanted to murder him, he could do little to prevent it. The enchanted dust had rendered him helpless.

Then, through eyes blurry with tears, he saw a new figure burst onto the scene. The stranger swung a broadsword, and one of Taegan's attackers screamed. Another ruffian lashed out with his cudgel, and steel rang as the swordsman parried so forcefully that it knocked the club from his adversary's grip. The newcomer riposted with a head cut, and the assailers ran.

The swordsman knelt beside Taegan. "Are you all right?"

The elf decided he was. The beating hadn't broken any bones, and the sneezing fit was passing. "Yes," he wheezed, "thanks to you."

The swordsman hauled him to his feet. Blinking, Taegan observed that his rescuer was a lanky, clean-shaven young man with a long, foxy face and curly hair. His finely stitched and embroidered cloak, jerkin, and breeches made the avariel self-conscious about the deerskin tunic and leggings that, as much as his wings, large eyes, and pointed ears, marked him as a barbarian.

The human peered down the alley, making sure the ruffians weren't returning. "Cursed slavers."

Taegan rubbed the sore spot on his head. "Is that what they were?"

"Probably. No offense, but you don't look like you're carrying anything worth stealing. On the block, though, a rarity like a winged elf can fetch a hefty price."

"I truly am grateful to you. My name is Taegan Nightwind." He offered his hand, and the human clasped it.

"I'm Falar Aporos, and you're welcome." He returned the broadsword to its scabbard. "I'm glad to do someone a good turn. This way, my last memory of Calaunt will be pleasant instead of bitter."

"Last memory?"

"I sail with the morning tide. I doubt I'll ever return."

Taegan silently cursed his luck. The only real friend he'd found and the fellow was about to disappear. "Why?"

Falar sighed. "It's an old, trite story. I love a lass I can't have, and I hope the heartache will be less painful if I put the waters of the Dragon Reach between us."

"Why can't you have her? Doesn't she love you back?"

It came to him that he was quite possibly going to die. Certainly, if his assailants wanted to kill him, he could do little to prevent it.

"She does, but her kin don't. Arveene's father and mine are both traders in grain and metals, and have been bitter rivals for years. Vonn Dalurieth would sooner see his daughter marry a dung beetle than an Aporos, so he holds her prisoner in her own house to keep us apart."

"Surely he can't do that forever."

Falar snorted. "You don't know him, or you wouldn't say that."

"But the customs of your people—"

"Allow him to dispose of an unwed daughter as he likes."

"What if the two of you married?"

"The law would place her beyond his reach, but what does it matter?"

"Isn't it obvious? All you have to do is get her out, then find a priest to perform the ceremony."

"Well, naturally, I've thought of that. But he holds her locked high in a tower. There's no way to sneak her out."

His feathers rustling, Taegan shook out his wings, calling attention to them. "High places are no problem for me."

"The guards would be."

"Since you found me floundering helpless beneath the blows of my attackers, I can see why you believe that, but truly, my predicament was a fluke. I was the best warrior in my tribe. I also mastered bladesong. Swordsman's magic."

"I believe you can handle yourself. You have that air. But I can't ask you to risk your life to solve a stranger's problem."

"You did the same for me, and besides, to be honest, I need a friend to help me learn to live in a human city. If I can bring Arveene to you, perhaps you'll consent to be that person."

"Succeed in this, and I'll cherish you like my own brother. When can you attempt it?"

"Tonight." Taegan hesitated. "It would be helpful if you could get me a sword." The blade he'd once borne was an irreplaceable treasure to a folk who no longer possessed any means of obtaining iron, and he'd left it behind when he forsook his tribe.

If Falar hesitated, it was only for an instant. "Take mine, and I pray to sweet Lady Firehair it brings you luck." He lifted his baldric over his head.

The crescent moon and the luminous, hazy trail that folk called her Tears were sinking in the west, and the background clamor of Calaunt was quieting at last by the time Taegan winged his way toward the walled mansion with its bristle of conical turrets stabbing against the stars. The avariel knew a pang of trepidation, of awareness that he was meddling in civilized dangers and complexities he didn't truly understand. He snorted the anxiety away. He'd abandoned his tribe to find adventure, hadn't he? *Well, here it is.*

He circled the estate, inspecting it from on high, noting the locations of the sentries stationed along the perimeter wall. They failed to notice him. The night hampered human eyes to a greater degree than it did an avariel's sight.

Within the enclosure, the grounds plainly served a variety of functions. Here and there were flowerbeds, vegetable plots and apple trees, stables and a circular pen, a square patch of grass with white lines painted on it, and a steep-walled depression in the earth, with rocks, trees, and even a gurgling artificial stream at the bottom as if to simulate the appearance of a natural woodland glade.

He wondered what purpose the ruled field and the pit served, but since they were irrelevant to his errand, he resisted the impulse to examine them more closely. Once satisfied he'd spotted every guard, he flew on toward the house on a line that all but guaranteed he'd remain unseen.

Arveene's tower jutted like a spear from the central mass of the mansion. He flew to one of the casements, lit on the narrow ledge outside, and kneeling there precariously, tried to open it. It wouldn't oblige.

He had no idea how to tamper with the unfamiliar mechanism that held such a device in place. He reckoned he could smash the panes, but not without making a lot of noise, so he whispered an incantation. The world blurred and jerked, and then he was kneeling on the parquet floor on the other side of the barrier.

The transposition was one of the most powerful spells in his repertoire. He couldn't cast it again tonight, but hoped he wouldn't need to. It should be obvious how to open the casement from the inside, or else Arveene would know, and he'd pass through with the maiden clasped in his arms. He couldn't really fly carrying so much weight, but he trusted that, dropping with his wings spread, he could manage a landing soft enough to preserve them both from harm. After that . . . well, he hadn't thought it out that far, but he'd slip her out of the compound somehow. He trusted his wits and skills to see him through.

The next step was to find the girl. He skulked on, through what was surely the most lavish prison in Calaunt. Most of the furnishings and decorations were strange to him, yet there was such an abundance of them—so many thick, soft rugs; imposing portraits and tapestries; polished, intricately carved tables and chairs, and globular oil lamps fashioned of multicolored glass—that the luxury was unmistakable, even to an intruder as primitive as he.

Someday, he resolved, he too would live in such surroundings, although probably without so many images of bears. The ursines appeared repeatedly, sculpted from onyx and jade, depicted on glazed tiles above a hearth, or prowling the backgrounds of oil paintings of warriors and patriarchs. Taegan inferred that either the bear was a Dalurieth family emblem or else Arveene was simply fond of them.

He discovered the object of his search sleeping in a spacious canopy bed with white curtains gathered at the posts. Round-faced, with freckled cheeks, a snub nose, and dark hair pent under a

The avariel knew a pang of trepidation, becoming aware that he was meddling in dangers and complexities he didn't truly understand.

ruffled nightcap, she lay curled on her side snoring, the sound a soft whistle.

He hesitated, uncertain how best to wake her, then crept forward. He'd use one hand to shake her awake and hold the other ready to cover her mouth in case she tried to call out.

He never made it to her side. He'd scarcely stepped into the opulent bedchamber when a rasping blare split the air. Startled, he faltered, and a hitherto hidden panel opened in the far wall. The closet behind it was only barely large enough to contain the pale, gaunt, hairless man who now emerged, a long needle of a thrusting sword in his left hand. He advanced on Taegan with disconcerting speed, his mouth gaping and shutting, shouting his eerie, wordless call as steadily and rhythmically as a drummer keeping the beat.

Taegan felt a pang of dismay. He'd invaded the house of Vonn Dalurieth to help a friend and reunite a pair of lovers. He hadn't wanted to hurt anyone in the process. There seemed no alternative, so he whipped out his borrowed sword and came on guard.

He feinted high, drew a parry, received the defensive action, and thrust low. To his surprise, the gaunt man managed to whip his blade down in time to deflect the true attack and then riposted with a stab to the guts. Taegan sprang backward, and the thrust fell short.

Still bellowing—how he could fight and likewise engage in this ceaseless shouting without running short of breath was a mystery—the hairless sentry instantly took up the distance and renewed the attack. Taegan had hoped he would. He captured his opponent's sword in a bind and sliced his forearm open.

Or rather, he tried. It took him a split second to realize the maneuver wasn't working as planned. The skinny warrior spun his weapon free and aimed the point to puncture and cripple Taegan's wrist. Aborting his attack and snatching his arm back at the last possible instant, the avariel still came away with a bloody graze.

Few people could react as quickly as Arveene's jailer unless they had magic accelerating their responses. Fortunately, Taegan could employ the same charm, if despite the gaunt man's harassment, he could articulate it successfully. Retreating, parrying repeatedly, he recited the words of power, and gripping a sliver of licorice root in his off hand, swept the spell focus through an intricate pass.

Magic hummed and shivered through the air, and the guard's actions seemed to slow, although Taegan knew that in reality, his own had sped up. Grinning, confident of his ability to best the spindly human now that they were fighting on equal terms, he went on the attack.

A few heartbeats later, a beat attack smashed the bald man's guard aside, and Taegan drove his point deep into the human's left shoulder. The attack probably wouldn't kill the still-bellowing fool, but it would give him something sensible to shout about. It would incapacitate him and end the fight.

At least it should have. The gaunt man simply tossed his sword into his right hand and thrust it at Taegan's heart.

Caught by surprise, the elf only barely managed to sidestep. He dragged on the hilt of his weapon, but it was stuck. As he struggled to work it loose, he saw in the bloodless wound toothy metal gears grinding the blade and holding it fast, just as he caught the sharp scent of oil.

No wonder the gaunt sentinel could yell and fight simultaneously without running short of breath. No wonder it had no hair, not even eyebrows or eyelashes. It wasn't a living creature at all, but an automaton built of artifice and wizardry.

The broadsword still wouldn't come free, and the mechanical guard was going to spit Taegan if he stayed in close pulling on it. A beat of his wings carried him several yards backward, and he cast about for another weapon, something that would afford him some reach. He suspected it would be suicide to oppose the automaton's long steel sword with his short stone knife.

His best option seemed to be a small marble-topped table. He snatched it up by the legs and held it before him, tumbling a rearing carnelian bear figurine and a painted paper fan to the floor. As he'd hoped, the tabletop made an effective shield.

It wasn't enough merely to block the automaton's thrusts. He had to destroy the wretched thing, and that meant using more bladesong to flummox it. Although it was awkward to swing the heavy, unbalanced table around one-handed, he risked it to free up his off hand for more cabalistic passes.

The metal sentinel's blade slipped past his guard and tore a second gash in his forearm before he knocked it away. Refusing to let the shock of being hit disrupt his incantation, he pressed on to the end. The shadows in the room whirled madly for a moment, and then four images of himself, each mimicking his appearance and motions to perfection, sprang into being around him.

The automaton thrust its sword into one of the false images, which burst into nothingness. For that instant, its point no longer threatened the real Taegan, and he sprang in and bashed it in the face, knocking it over backward.

He clubbed it again and again, concentrating on the head, hoping some vital element analogous to a brain resided inside the crumpling metal skull. Finally, the guard stopped trying to stab him and scramble to its feet. Finally, it stopped shouting.

That, however, failed to bring quiet. With the automaton silenced, Taegan realized for the first time that Arveene was shrieking, too. He planted one foot on the ruined mechanism, gripped the hilt of his sword with both hands, at last succeeded in yanking it free, then turned to the girl cowering in her bed.

He saw in the bloodless wound toothy metal gears grinding the blade and holding it fast, just as he caught the sharp scent of oil.

"It's all right," he said. "Falar sent me to bring you to him."

She kept on yelling for help.

"Please," he said, easing closer, trying not to frighten her any further, "I make look strange to you, but Falar—"

"I don't know any Falar!" she cried. "Keep away!"

She doesn't know Falar? Astonished, he gaped at her, then heard men shouting, footsteps pounding. Naturally, all the noise had summoned help up the stairs that descended to the rest of the house.

He cast about, spotted a casement large enough to accommodate him, and dashed toward it. Two more automatons, each identical to the one he'd destroyed, plunged through the doorway and raced to cut him off. He reached the window a pace ahead of them, and since he had no time to fumble with the unfamiliar latch, simply dived at the panes.

Glass smashed, and he was out, tumbling until he spread his wings to arrest his plummeting fall. He beat his pinions, climbing, and suddenly a barrage of huge hailstones hammered him and popped his remaining illusory counterparts. The balls of ice couldn't have fallen from the clear summer sky. A magician must have conjured them.

Bruised and bloodied, knowing it was sheer luck the attack hadn't crippled or killed him, Taegan wheeled around the tower so the wizard, who was presumably standing behind the same casement the avariel had just crashed through, wouldn't be able to see and target him anymore.

The evasive action evidently worked, because the spellcaster didn't strike at him a second time. As Taegan hastily flew away from the mansion, he noticed something curious.

A gate in the perimeter wall stood open, and a man-at-arms lay dead on the ground behind it. A few yards farther on, one of the sheer walls of the pit had crumbled into a gentler slope. Plainly, only magic could have reshaped it so quickly. At the bottom, some huge animal lay motionless with crossbow quarrels sticking out of its gory fur.

Taegan reckoned he understood more or less what it all meant, and the realization made him sick with anger. He flew on to the tavern where he was supposed to rendezvous with Falar. As he'd expected, the human failed to appear.

Hunched low, Taegan crept from rooftop to rooftop as he'd once negotiated the limbs of the great trees of the Earthwood. He'd been hunting then and was doing it now as well.

Certain that after the debacle in the tower, the city authorities would be seeking him, he'd fled Calaunt to spend the day hiding and foraging for food in the surrounding farmlands. He sneaked back into the port after dusk to prowl the same ill-lit precinct of narrow lanes, taverns, gambling halls, pawnshops, and streetwalkers where he'd *encountered Olma and Falar. He didn't know what* else to do.

Actually, that wasn't true. It had occurred to him that it might be prudent simply to fly on to some other part of Faerûn, but he couldn't bring himself to do it. Ever since he'd first laid eyes on humans bearing the exotic accoutrements of their civilization, he'd yearned to partake of its bounty.

Alas, his first sojourn in a city had revealed an ugly, treacherous side to the human world that made him question his aspirations. Perhaps, as his elders had always warned, he'd be better off among his own people. He refused to slink home a dupe and a fool, though; refused to be driven out.

Yet as the hours passed without result, he wondered if he weren't a feckless dolt after all. He knew how to stalk game in the wild, but he had little confidence in his ability to locate human prey. What if Olma and Falar had gone to ground, or that simply didn't frequent this neighborhood on a regular basis? How, then, would he ever find either of them in the vast and intricate beehive that was Calaunt?

Finally, though, Olma and four companions, three male, one female, came weaving up the street, clutching bottles and laughing raucously. The blond woman had new baubles flashing about her person. *Probably Falar's coin paid for those and the celebration as well.*

Taegan's muscles clenched in anger. He made himself relax and lie still until the humans ambled directly underneath him.

When they did, he sprang down into their midst. It was possible Olma's companions were innocent of any wrongdoing, but a fugitive outnumbered five to one couldn't afford to be gentle. He hammered the pommel of his sword down on one man's head, and the fellow collapsed. Pivoting, the elf sliced a second reveler's calf, and the human reeled backward, hesitated, then kept right on limping away. By that time, the remaining man had snatched his falchion from its scabbard and come on guard. Taegan feinted a head cut, drawing the parry, then rotated his blade and slashed his opponent's wrist. The fellow dropped his weapon and bolted.

Indeed, except for the man Taegan had knocked unconscious, the humans were all running and scattering, but none of them fled as fast as an avariel could fly. Taegan leapt into the air and streaked after Olma. He watched to see if she'd pull out any more sneezing dust, but even if she possessed another dose, she was evidently frightened enough that she'd rather take to her heels than make a stand.

He kicked her between the shoulders, flinging her facedown in the dirt, then landed beside her. When she rolled over, he poised his sword an inch before her left eye. The point was jagged and pitted from the automaton's gears, but could still pierce a target easily enough. Olma froze.

"Where's Falar?" he asked. "Assuming that's his real name. In any case, you know who I mean."

At the bottom, some huge animal lay motionless with crossbow quarrels sticking out of its gory fur.

"No," she said.

He twitched the sword, and she flinched. "Don't lie to me," he said. "I figured it out. You luring me down the alley, the ruffians setting on me, Falar coming to my aid—it was all an elaborate trick to make me trust him so completely on just a few minutes' acquaintance that I'd undertake a dangerous errand on his behalf.

"Unfortunately, my actual task was merely to create a diversion. While I drew everyone's attention to the tower, Falar was breaching the gate and committing an outrage on the grounds."

"All right," she said. "He paid me to set you up. Are you going to kill me, or can I make it up to you? You fancied me before." She licked her lips lasciviously.

He shook his head, amazed at her gall. "I'm afraid your charms have lost their luster, but you can buy back your life with information. How did Falar settle on me to be his pawn?"

"A lot of people took note of you as you wandered around, gawking, asking stupid questions, and ogling us whores like a boy whose voice has just broken."

He winced at the half-witted figure he'd evidently cut. "Whereupon it occurred to Falar that, with my wings, I could create an alarm where no human could, and that I was stupid enough to trick."

"Well, yes. He's like that, always scheming and looking for every advantage."

"What was the point of it all?"

"To kill one bear and steal the other."

"This is about bears?"

"Yes. Huge beasts. Dire bears, I think they're called. I don't know all the ins and outs of it, but the Dalurieths have a family legend that such animals helped them establish their fortune, and their luck is tied to them."

"The dire bear is their totem."

"I don't know what that means, but supposedly, as long as they have such creatures living with them, they'll prosper, but if the bears ever go, the family's luck will vanish with them. Falar said Vonn Dalurieth believes it completely."

Taegan reckoned he was starting to think like a civilized human, because he recognized the implications. "Falar means to ransom the sole surviving bear back to the Dalurieths."

"Or sell it to one of their rivals. Falar knows something about magic, and he says a warlock or priest of the dark powers could use the bear to lay a curse on Vonn. His attachment to the beast provides the necessary link even if the family belief is just a superstition."

"Well, it won't come to that. Arveene Dalurieth got a good look at me, and I'm sure that right now, the city guards are hunting me on the assumption that I participated willingly in the theft. But if I return the bear, I'll be in the clear."

"All right. I'll tell you where the animal is, you tell the watch, and—"

"No." He didn't know how the watch operated. They might attack him on sight. Even if they wouldn't, he needed to do considerably more than play informer to prove to himself that he was competent to face the challenges of the human world. "I'll confront Falar and recover the bear myself."

"Don't be daft. Falar's tough, his gang's tough, and he's got a magician working for him, too. That's how he was able to herd the bear into the wagon. The wizard cast a charm to make it docile."

"I'm reasonably tough, myself, and besides, I have you to help me."

She paled beneath her mask of rouge. "Oh no. I told you what you wanted to know. Now I'm out of it."

"I'm afraid not, unless you want me to kill you here and now." He extended his empty hand. She hesitated, then suffered him to haul her to her feet.

The sun had risen over Calaunt's eastern skyline by the time Taegan and Olma approached the shuttered warehouse. Gulls wheeled overhead or landed to pick at refuse near the grimy brick building only a stone's throw from the docks. The breeze carried the briny smell of seawater. A lifelong forest dweller, the elf found the marine birds and odor as novelties, but he was too edgy to pay them much notice.

He forced his captive to take him to her cramped, dirty rented room, then bound and gagged her with strips torn from a blanket. That enabled him to concentrate on his grimoire, its ragged pages made of mashed, bleached, and dried leaf, its inks brewed from berries, without having to worry about her escaping. With a fresh complement of spells held ready for the casting in his memory, Taegan reckoned he was about as prepared to confront Falar and his henchmen as he was likely to become.

One such illusion was the charm presently shrouding him in a veil of invisibility. He reasoned that Falar kept the dire bear in some secure indoor location where prying eyes couldn't see it. The magic, with Olma's aid, should both enable him to slip inside unnoticed and afford him a crucial advantage afterward.

The streetwalker's assistance, of course, was contingent on her dread of him. If she ever believed her unseen companion had strayed out of striking distance or otherwise relaxed his vigilance, she'd likely betray him on the instant. That was one of several reasons he was tense.

Olma balked in front of the heavy ironbound door. "Go on," he whispered.

"Give this up. They'll only kill the both of us."

"I'll kill you right now if you fail me." He prodded her lightly with the tip of the broadsword. She jumped, then swallowed and knocked a tattoo on the panel, three raps, a pause, and then two more.

"I will kill you right now if you fail me." He prodded her lightly with the tip of the broadsword.

After a few moments, a little trapdoor in the center of the door swung inward, and an eye peered out. "What do you want?" growled a masculine voice.

"I have to talk to Falar," Olma said.

"He told you, you'll get the rest of your cut when we sell the beast."

"It's not that. I think somebody knows who stole it."

"Shadows of Mask," the outlaw swore. Hinges creaking, the door opened just enough to admit a single person. Taegan only barely managed to squirm through after Olma before Falar's henchmen, a chunky, black-bearded man with a scarred, misshapen ear, slammed and secured it once again.

"Come on, then," the ruffian said. He led Olma deeper into the gloomy warehouse and Taegan skulked along behind, studying his adversaries and the cavernous space, open save for a scatter of crates and bales that in a matter of seconds would become his battleground.

Falar was here, and the sight of him sent a thrill of hatred singing through Taegan's nerves. Half a dozen other outlaws were present as well, and the avariel recognized a couple of the men who'd bludgeoned him in the alley. Most of the gang had been sleeping in nests of blankets on the floor, but yawning, rubbing their eyes, and cursing, were rising now to see what was causing the fuss.

To Taegan's chagrin, he couldn't pick the wizard out from the others, and if he failed to eliminate the magician at the very start of the combat, before the latter could start casting spells, it would lengthen the already long odds against him. *Well,* he thought, *I'll just have to cope.*

Growling and glaring out at its captors, prowling back and forth—the spell of docility had plainly worn off—its musky smell suffusing the entire building, the gigantic brown dire bear occupied the rear of the warehouse. A line of carved stone disks on the floor cast a curtain of colorless shimmer in front of the animal. Taegan surmised the stones formed a magical barrier to keep the ursine penned in its corner.

"You should have gone back to the woods where you belong." "I might just do that, but first I'm going to return your sword to you."

In his stocking feet, his handsome jerkin unlaced, Falar scowled at Olma.

"What's this all about?" he demanded.

She started babbling a vague story about shadowy figures, spies for the watch, perhaps, following her. Taegan considered cutting Falar down immediately, then decided against it. If he killed one of the other outlaws first, he had a one in six chance of eliminating the mage. Besides, he wanted Falar to know his death was coming and who was bringing it.

So, sword poised for a thrust to the heart, he tiptoed toward one of the lesser knaves. Then, from behind him, came the sound of a voice whispering words of power.

Damn it! Thanks to some enchantment or talisman of warning, the wizard had sensed an intruder's presence and was weaving a spell. Taegan whirled, searching, and spied a scrawny man with a weak chin and tousled straw-colored hair sweeping his hands through a mystic gesture. The avariel leaped into the air and took flight, no longer concerned that the rustle of his wings would reveal him. The more important thing was to cut down the mage before he completed his incantation.

He didn't quite make it. Power groaned through the air, and a tingling chill swept over Taegan's body. The spell caused him no hurt, but was surely meant to hinder him in some way. He suspected its purpose was to wipe his invisibility away, and sure enough, a split second later, the other ruffians cried out and oriented on him hurtling through the air.

Taegan resolved that was the only spell the wretch would cast, but when he cut at the warlock's head, the human vanished, and the blade whizzed through empty air. Taegan recognized it as the same spell of instantaneous travel he had used, but the wizard hadn't had time to cast another charm. He must have carried the effect bound in a ring or amulet.

Taegan turned, and two outlaws rushed at him. He beat his wings, rose beyond reach of their blades, and surveyed the warehouse, seeking the magician anew. Olma ran for the door until a ruffian knocked her flat with a snap of his cudgel. A pudgy, walleyed man pulled a short sword from a pewter scabbard. Falar lashed Taegan's arm—

Pain exploded through his head, and Taegan realized Falar had hit him with a stone or bullet from a sling. It paralyzed him, and he plummeted back toward the pair of bullies directly beneath him.

It caught them by surprise. His outspread wings swatted them, knocked them staggering, and that was surely the only thing that prevented them from slaughtering him instantly. He had to shake off the shock of the impact to the head, had to put himself in motion once more.

As he scrambled to his feet, the two outlaws drove in. He slashed one across the throat, pivoted to face the other, and was a hair too slow. By turning, he kept the rogue from burying a hatchet in his spine, but the blow still chopped into the muscle of his wing. Refusing to let another injury freeze him in place, Taegan shouted and drove his sword into his foe's belly. Agitated by the violence, the dire bear roared in its cage of brick and blur.

Taegan pulled his bloody weapon free and attempted to take to the air. The only result was a stab of agony. The hatchet had rendered him incapable of flight. Nor could he flicker instantaneously from one place to another as the wizard had done. Not this morning. He'd denied himself that capability in favor of his now-lost invisibility.

Falar and three of his accomplices spread out to encircle Taegan. The yellow-haired wizard hovered farther back, behind the protection of his cronies. "I never thought you'd escape the mansion alive," Falar said, grinning. "I reckoned old Dalurieth's nimblewrights or sorcery would do for you. What a shame you survived all that only to come and die here. You should have flapped back to the woods where you belong."

"I might just do that," Taegan said, "but first I'm going to return your sword to you."

"Take him," said Falar to his underlings, meanwhile switching out his sling for a blade. "But be careful. He was the best fighter in his tribe." His tone invested the word with a world of contempt, and the other humans laughed.

As his foes closed in, Taegan retreated, attempting to buy himself enough time to whisper an incantation and sketch an arcane pattern with the licorice root in his off hand. The outlaws realized his intent and rushed him to disrupt the conjuration.

Their haste cost them. Taegan sidestepped so they didn't all reach him at the same time, parried a cut to the cheek, and riposted with a slash to the flank that dropped the walleyed human on his rump. All the while, he continued casting the spell. On the final syllable, his opponents seemed to slow as his own perceptions accelerated.

Smiling savagely, the avariel drove his broadsword into an outlaw's torso. It was a straight attack, no deception to it, but the human simply couldn't parry or retreat quickly enough to save himself. Another thief hacked at Taegan, but the cut seemed to drift lazily through the air, and he ducked it without difficulty. He spun toward Falar and was gratified to see that the curly-haired man's expression of smugness had given way to dismay. He extended his arm to cut–

–and still lurking safely behind his comrades, sweeping some sort of spell focus through a pass, the wizard jabbered, "You won't use weapons anymore! You can't even touch them!"

Taegan's fingers flew open. The broadsword clanked on the floor.

Falar reacted quickly to the opportunity. He lunged and cut, and stupid with astonishment as Taegan was, only his augmented speed enabled him to dodge. He retreated, fumbling for the rawhide-wrapped grip of his flint knife. His hand refused to grasp it.

Maybe Taegan could still throw the boxes that were scattered about or circumvent the geas with some other sort of object not generally considered a weapon. He sprinted toward a jumble of dusty crates, and conjured darts of yellow light slammed into his torso. They somehow penetrated without breaking the skin, but the frigid jolt of the piercing was ghastly. It nearly enabled Falar and his fellow swordsman to cut Taegan down before he floundered back out of reach.

Taegan realized that, wounded as he already was, makeshift weapons, even if he could in fact grasp them, wouldn't save him. Neither would the defensive capabilities afforded by his remaining spells. He was going to die here, die knowing his dream of a brave new life had turned out to be a pathetic joke.

Then the bear roared anew, and the elf realized he might still have an effective weapon after all. He turned and raced toward the ursine. Falar and his confederates gave chase.

He was going to die here, die knowing his dream of a brave new life had turned out to be a pathetic joke.

Taegan staggered from pain and weakness, but his enchantment still quickened his movements, and that enabled him to stay a pace ahead of his pursuers' blades.

The elf dived on his belly and slid the last few feet up to the curtain of rippling sheen. He grabbed one of the carved stone disks and threw it across the warehouse. With the line of talismans broken, the magical shimmer vanished instantly. The enraged dire bear lunged forward.

Taegan was nearest to the dark, shaggy mountain of a beast with its bloodshot eyes blazing beneath bony ridges, and naturally, it sprang at him first. A child of the wilderness, the elf knew the habits of such animals and thus understood he had one chance at life. He lay perfectly still, making himself a passive thing that plainly posed no threat to the ursine whatsoever.

The city folk didn't know bears. They cried out. They brandished their swords. Even the wounded ones who'd hunkered on the floor nursing their hurts scrambled backward. After a moment that seemed to Taegan's overtaxed nerves to stretch out into an eternity, the dire bear leaped over him and charged the outlaws. Still lying prone, the avariel turned his head to watch what would happen next.

To his credit, the mage hadn't panicked. Lashing his hands, through an intricate figure, he chanted rhyming words of power. Taergan guessed he was trying to beguile the animal as he had before.

Whatever he was attempting, it didn't work. The dire bear reared and plunged down on him like an avalanche. The wizard only screamed for an instant, and then parts of him flew through the air.

The magician's death obliterated whatever inclination the other ruffians had to stand their ground. They bolted toward the exit, unaware that an ursine can easily run down an elf or man. The colossal dire bear with its long legs pounced among them in an instant. The animal whirled, rending and trampling, flinging a red haze into the air around it.

Falar was the last outlaw standing. He managed one deep cut, but for all the notice the bear took, he might as well have slapped it with his bare hand. The beast raked with its forepaw and essentially tore away everything between his throat and groin.

Well, trickster, Taegan thought, *I never gave you back your sword, but this way is all right, too.*

Grunting, the bear started sniffing and otherwise examining its kill. Left unmolested, such animals rarely hunted elves or men, but if a corpse happened to be lying in front of them, they were willing enough to eat it. Panting, shivering, his mind clouded with blood loss and exhaustion, it took Taegan a few seconds to realize that he should probably try to make his escape now; and it took several more to muster the strength to draw himself to his feet.

He sidled slowly around the wall, giving the animal a wide berth, croaking a tribal chant all the

while. He didn't want to irritate the gigantic bear, but he also didn't want it to lose track of him and abruptly notice him moving, either. It was dangerous to startle such animals. That was often when they attacked.

He made it most of the way to the door, and then, suddenly, for no particular reason he could discern, the bear turned to glower at him. Its muscles bunched as it gathered itself to charge.

Backpedaling, increasing the distance between them, Taegan recited words of power and sketched mystic sigils on the air. The ursine exploded into motion.

Taegan just managed to complete the charm before the immense animal closed with him. Phantasmal images, each his twin in every respect, sprang into existence around him. He sprinted for the door, and the illusions ran with him.

The dire bear lunged after, slashing with its claws. Each swipe obliterated a phantom, and each was capable of annihilating the real Taegan almost as thoroughly. Even if the beast worked its way through all the images first, that would only take it another moment or two.

Taegan reached the door, peered at it, and for one ghastly instant couldn't see how to unlock it. Then he perceived how the twin bolts were meant to twist and slide in their sockets. He tore at with them, and the dire bear ripped his last remaining illusion into nothingness. The beast whirled toward him and raised its forepaw for the killing stroke. He jerked the door open, spun himself through, and slammed it behind him.

The panel banged and jerked in its frame, and for a moment, he expected the bear to burst through it. Taegan realized it could have, too, the iron reinforcements notwithstanding. The bear didn't seem to realize that, though, because it didn't strike the barrier a second time.

Taegan let out a long sigh of relief. Now that he'd recovered the bear—and his confidence with it—he could go talk to the watch. He just hoped he wouldn't pass out before he found them.

"More wine?" Vonn Dalurieth asked, and when Taegan said yes, the carafe floated across the sunny balcony to refill his crystal goblet with the tart white vintage. The short, graying merchant-wizard enjoyed showing off his magic, often using it to perform tasks that might just as easily have been accomplished by mundane means, such as ordering one of the liveried servants in attendance to perform them.

Not that Taegan begrudged the wealthy trader his petty vanities. Vonn had been a generous benefactor to him, paying for healers to treat his wounds and allowing the elf to recuperate in his own palatial house. The human had been so grateful to recover the dire bear he didn't care that it was partly Taegan's fault Falar had managed to steal the animal in the first place.

Vonn gazed out across the city, which looked bright and clean under the clear blue sky. A mild wind swept the stink of the tanneries out to sea, which aided the illusion of freshness. "It's impressive, isn't it?" the merchant said.

"Impressive enough," Taegan said.

"But not as fine as your imaginings."

"It certainly turned out to be different." Although the human world had proved to possess more than its share of meanness and rapacity, it also contained novelties and pleasures in abundance. The delicate bouquet of the costly wine in his glass, the soft comfort of the layered garments Vonn had given him, the succulent meals of many courses served at the rich man's table, the stimulation of new people and new ideas, and a thousand more all appealed to the barbaric elf. Taegan suddenly realized he knew what he meant to do. "But I can play your human games, so I'm staying."

Vonn smiled. "I was hoping you'd decide that way, because I have a proposition for you . . ."

step away from the twenty.

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THE ROARING DRAGON HOUSE

by Ed Greenwood · illustrated by David Day

The Roaring Dragon House is a new establishment, opened by the proprietor of The High Flagon gambling house, that stands about a mile and a half outside Waterdeep. Meant to "restrict the rowdy-blades to their own place," the Dragon is a center for gambling games that's built to be suited to brawling and the rampages of any escaped fighting beasts.

The Roaring Dragon House offers a paltry selection of drinkables, overpricing them outrageously, but has no rooms for rent and sells no food. As a result, there's a steady flow of traffic between the two sister establishments. Drunken, timid, wounded, and unprepared travelers are warned that footpads and thieves frequently take notice of this ready source of coins—particularly after dark.

WHAT MEETS THE EYE

The Roaring Dragon is solidly built of stone, with an entry arch resembling the fanged upper jaw of a gape-mouthed dragon. It has only a ground floor (although the ceiling is 20 feet aloft), bare stone walls, and a flag-stone floor. This main room is apt to be both cold and noisy.

Its yard is surrounded by a high stone wall constructed to discourage thieves, and it is heavily patrolled by hired mercenaries. Over forty guards watch from dusk to dawn, lightening to a mere twenty by day. Almost all are lawful neutral male humans (War1 or War2), most with experience in controlling out-of-control gamblers.

Anyone approaching the Dragon is challenged at the yard-gates by two guards in impressive full plate (complete with gleaming dragon-form helms). Two reinforcements sit in gatehouses right behind them, and all four are armed with longswords, daggers, glaives, and loaded hand crossbows. Known troublemakers, drunkards, and persons who look like they'll be trouble are often denied entry. If a guest passes within, four more guards await at the stables, and another four attend the Dragon's entry doors.

From here, the main entry doors open into a passage that runs along one end of the large, barnlike gaming room, and ends in a greeting gate. Most of the time, this third gate stands open, with two guards just outside of it, and two just inside, standing with an alluringly clad but hard-bitten hostess. All a would-be patron must do is get past her questions before being allowed into the gaming room, as admission is free.

The gaming room opens out to the left of an arrived guest who's admitted through the gate. At its far end is a bar (with more guards), and beside that is a teller's cage for money changing and the deposit of coins earned by the house. Down the right side of the room, a wide space is kept clear of tables to allow easy circulation.

The cage has floor-to-ceiling bars and more guards inside and out (some with leveled hand crossbows). For security, funds are dropped through small holes in the floor into a strongroom beneath (so the cage never contains much money). When more coins are needed, a slender bucket is lowered on a line with a scrawled request in it; the strongroom counting clerk exchanges the note for funds and taps on the bucket to signal that it can be pulled back up.

The strongroom has its own guards, inside and out (by the door of the cellar passage leading to it, which is reached from a "ready room" behind the bar). The other cellar-rooms are an armory, a wine cellar, and a storage room for chairs, tables, and gaming equipment.

Staff entering and leaving the strongroom do so naked. They disrobe, passing clothes, arms, and armor to the proprietor and other guards for inspection, dressing again when passed through.

Waterdhavian bankers send their own heavily-guarded wagons to the Dragon to pick up tallied takings. These are signed for and taken straight to vaults in the city for recounting under the scrutiny of a Harbright family trade-agent.

DOINGS AT THE DRAGON

The Roaring Dragon House is owned by the Harbright family. Drengar Harbright installed his nephew Thoalur (LN male human Exp3/War1) and niece Brarindra (CN female human Exp4) to run the Dragon. They take shifts in turn, occasionally relieved by other Harbrights.

By day, the Roaring Dragon House is fairly quiet, holding a few diehard gamblers and folk meeting to talk business. Nights are apt to be "roaring."

House rules include expulsion for cheats and persons who "willfully and repeatedly taunt," start a fight or fire, draw a weapon, or cause a death. Magic use is forbidden and earns beatings, confiscation of property, or

even death (depending on the severity of the use and how dangerous or influential the offender seems).

The most popular dice game at the Roaring Dragon currently is Over the Hurdles. Live games usually consist of betting on, or participating in and betting on, beast fights, duels, throwknife, and zzar wrestling.

Belly and Gullet

A few drinkables can be had in the Dragon, all served in clay cups that crumble if struck and that are too light to throw far (once their contents spill, they catch air and tumble). Ale and stout are 4 sp per cup; zzar and a poor se-lection of wine and spirts are 2 gp per cup.

Over The Hurdles

This game is played by two to ten folk, each using a pair of dice. They sit around a table covered by a cloth marked with "the course" (a track of joined squares), and move small carved tokens, pebbles, or bones to represent themselves as a knight spurring his charger. The game is won by being the first to reach the end square; advancement is by rolling precise numbers.

All knights begin in the stables; to ride onto the course (the first square), they must roll a 4. Each square of the course is marked by the number needed to enter it, and these are as follows: Stable-4-3-4-4-4-5-4-6-4-7-4-8-4-9-4-10-4-11-4-12 (the last square, known variously as "Glory" or "Home Again").

Players begin by placing their marker in the stables, taking two dice, and rolling one. Highest roll goes first (for the rest of the game), next highest second, and so on (ties re-roll, to determine precedence just between the tied players).

The first player then rolls both dice once, but can only advance onto the course by a roll of 4. Any other result means he sits in the stables and his turn is done. After all players have rolled, and then passed the dice left, a second round of rolling commences. In this way the game passes until one player reaches Glory and becomes the winner.

Every player is allowed an extra roll once during the game; declaring "taking the extra" aloud before doing so. This roll may only be made right after the player has rolled.

Wagering can be conducted throughout the game: on outcome, results of rolls, which of two or more players will reach a particular square first, and so on—but no wager or response can be uttered as a player is rolling or while the dice are still tumbling, or the rolling player gets a free replacement roll and any offenders have their knights put back a square.

In the grandest gaming estab-lishments (and even in the Dragon) dice rolls are made along a leather chute (a long wooden and leather-lined triangle with side-walls several inches high and the sharp point filled in so no dice can become wedged in the angle), and the course is permanently marked into the top of a playing-table.

Beast Fights

Cockfights, dogfights, and ferret-fights were once popular, but they were supplanted by monster battles. These have largely died out due to lack of combatants, leading Brarindra Harbright to post a standing offer of 600 gp, payable to anyone willing to sell a healthy, unintelligent combatant to the Roaring Dragon House.

Duels

Intelligent combatants can fight to earn money or to settle disputes, but the guards allow struggles only to last until surrender, unconsciousness, or first blood—often with combatants stripped down and wearing leather hoods that protect the eyes but force them to fight blind. Permitted weapons are wooden switches and leather paddles sporting a single metal fang at the end.

Hardriders

This game is played on a long, smooth-polished table with raised sides. Above the table and halfway down it, two uprights support a bar with a flat pan affixed to it. Four carved wooden "hazard" pieces are placed on this pan.

Players take turn shooting their "riders" down the table, winning by getting their riders the farthest. Riders are round, smooth-polished wooden, bone, or metal disks like large, thick coins. They must all be of approx-imately the same size and weight.

Riders are "shot" by placing them partially overhanging one end of the table, and then striking them with a player's hand, heel, fingers, or whole-hand slap, but no other body parts or striking aids can be used, and the table can't be shifted by the shooting motion. Shots are made separately, down a clear table (other riders and hazards removed). The moment a player shoots, the coin keeper (judge and bet holder for the game) twists the bar to flip the hazard pan, spilling the hazards onto the table to bounce at random, as obstacles to the moving rider. A player is allowed to observe the arrangement of hazards on the pan before placing and shooting his rider.

A hardrider table of less than six feet long is rare, and twelve-foot tables are popular. The Dragon's tables are all ten feet long.

Throwknife

Essentially darts played with thrown knives, participants must throw from a marked circle at a well-lit target on the wall, and they are only allowed to draw their weapons while in the circle. Most matches are "best strike" or "forty-four" (reaching a scoring total of forty-four points by hitting areas marked as worth a particular number of points).

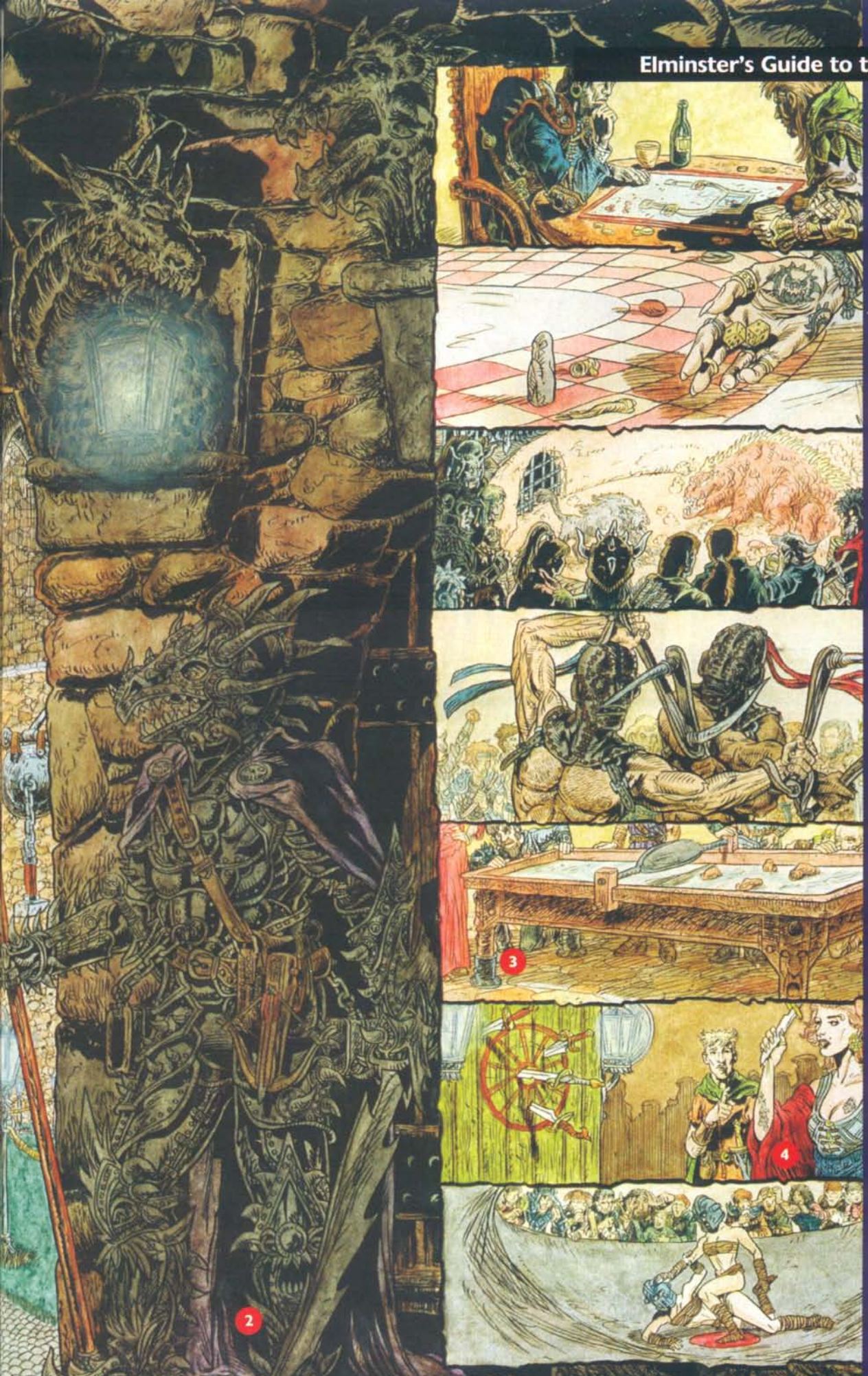
Zzar Wrestling

As the name suggests, this often-amusing sport is wrestling wherein all participants and the bowl they fight in are coated with sticky zzar (a strong alcoholic beverage that tastes of almonds). The scantily-clad combatants are often males and females hired for their looks. Matches are fought in a smooth-finished stone bowl about ten feet across. The object is to force the opponent's hand to touch a brightly-painted circle. Faces (and long hair) are protected inside war-helms. Matches might be first-touch, best of three, or in teams to be the first to score a total (usually nine).

ELMINSTER'S NOTES

Know ye that the Waterdeep Watch is very reluctant to allow beast-fights since several evil wizards magically forced humans into beast-shape, their crimes being discovered only after death in the cage-ring. Oh, aye, one more thing: I won at zzar wrestling once. It took days to get it out of my beard, but Storm's hair was worse for far longer. I "surprised her," she said.

1



THE ROARING DRAGON HOUSE

1. All regular guardposts in the Roaring Dragon have pull-ropes that ring alarm-gongs in the ready-room, where the on-duty proprietor oversees the house's operation. The proprietor typically carries tanglefoot bags to deal nonlethally with minor troublemakers.

2. A lever set into the floor under the boots of the guards at the greeting-gate operates a wooden treadle that can dump a load of rubble down on the heads of persons in the front half of the entry-passage. Those in this area when the trap is activated suffer a +12 melee attack that causes 2d6 points of damage from falling bricks. A DC 20 Search check reveals this trap, while a DC 20 Disable Device check renders it inoperable.

3. Most gaming-tables latch into floor sockets (with cross-pins) to prevent tables being tipped over or snatched up in a fight or to disrupt a game. This also helps prevent more enthusiastic hardriders players from being disqualified.

4. Hired escorts entertain experienced players, but they teach novice gamblers game rules for free.

These escorts know the price and potency of the Dragon's drinks and typically push their patrons toward excess, both to increase the escort's own tips and to increase a gambler's wagers (and losses).

by Mat Smith • images provided by Wizards of the Coast

EBERRON

Dragonmarks, Dragonshards, and Dynasties of Power

From the deepest pits of Khyber to the encircling Ring of Siberys, magic infuses the world of EBERRON. This all-encompassing magic is most strongly evidenced in two distinct ways: dragonshards and dragonmarks.

Dragonshards are translucent crystals and rocks shot through with glowing veins of pulsating arcane energy. Whether incorporated into a magical device, used to harness powerful elementals, or utelized to enhance the power of a dragonmark, these rare magical stones are highly sought after for their potent energy and seemingly limitless applications.

Dragonmarks are unique, arcane sigils that manifest on the skin of certain members of particular dynastic families, granting their bearers spell-like abilities. It is the power and influence derived from these strange hereditary markings that enable each of the dragonmarked houses to dominate their respective areas of trade.

THE DRAGONMARKED HOUSES OF KHORVAIRE

For centuries, the great dragonmarked houses have held unwavering control over industry and commerce throughout the continent of Khorvaire and beyond. With enclaves and emporiums scattered throughout the continent, the extended family of each of the dragonmarked houses actively maintains its dominance over trade regardless of political or economic turmoil—even as the continent plunged into the Last War, the dragonmarked houses maintained their control over their respective trade guilds throughout the devastating conflict while remaining mostly neutral.

The control and influence of these dynastic houses stems from the hereditary mystic sigils that manifest on certain individuals within the family—the dragonmarks. These arcane markings grant their bearers limited but very useful magical abilities associated with the commerce and trade guilds the family controls. For example, some members of House Cannith manifest the Mark of Making, which confers magic powers to mend or create material goods, placing them in a position of control over the Tinkers' Guild and Fabricators' Guild. Of course, most members of the extensive dragonmarked houses do not carry a dragonmark. These unmarked members are generally skilled in crafts or talents related to the family's sphere of influence (such as becoming accomplished metalsmiths or artisans, in the case of House Cannith).

Each house utilizes dragonmarked and unmarked family members, as well as other unrelated retainers, to effectively run their various business endeavors. Dragonmarked guild members make use of their specialized spell-like abilities, while unmarked members handle the mundane aspects of the trade. For example, the Windwrights' Guild (controlled by House Lyrandar) places family members who bear the Mark of the Storm to conjure wind and other favorable weather conditions

to power their ships, while unmarked guild members fill out the rest of each vessel's ordinary crew compliment.

THE APPEARANCE OF DRAGONMARKS

Dragonmarks are intricate, colorful patterns that appear on the skin of seemingly random members of the dragonmarked families. On extremely rare occasions, an individual who is not a recognized member of a dragonmarked house will manifest a dragonmark, although this is usually the result of some past indiscretion rather than a miraculous happening. Regardless of whether a character is a manor-born scion, a distant relation, or an illegitimate child, any individual who is related by blood to a dragonmarked house may manifest a dragonmark at any point in his life.

Whether this mysterious event occurs at a character's birth or at her bicentennial, it grants only minor spell-like abilities. In game terms, this is the point at which a character has taken the Least Dragonmark feat (see Becoming a Dragonmarked Character). Over time, the power (and complexity of the design) of a character's dragonmark may be increased by taking the Lesser Dragonmark and Greater Dragonmark feats, as well as by selecting the dragonmark heir prestige class.

BECOMING A DRAGONMARKED CHARACTER

Your character can manifest a dragonmark at any point during the campaign, providing your character meets the prerequisites for taking the Least Dragonmark feat. The first qualification is based on your character's race, which must be one of the standard DUNGEONS & DRAGONS character races (human, dwarf, elf, gnome, half-elf, half-orc, or halfling). The second qualification (which may need your Dungeon Master's approval) is that your character must be related to an appropriate dragonmarked house. Because the dynasties of each of the dragonmarked houses reach far back into the distant past, it's not surprising that about one person in a hundred has some blood relation to a dragonmarked house. Once the prerequisites for selecting the Least Dragonmark feat are met, you must choose one of the abilities listed with your house's least mark and also gain a bonus to a particular skill related to your house's sphere of influence.

Least Dragonmark [General]
You have a least dragonmark.

Prerequisite: Member of appropriate dragonmarked race and house.

Benefit: You gain a least dragonmark and the use of one spell-like ability associated with the least dragonmark of your house. (An abbreviated list follows.)

A saving throw against your dragonmark spell-like ability has a DC of 10 + the level of the spell + your Chaisma modifier. Your caster level for your least dragonmark spell-like ability is 1 + your level in the dragonmark heir prestige class (if any).

- Least Mark of Detection (House Medani): *Detect magic* 2/day or *detect poison* 2/day; +2 bonus on Spot checks.
- Least Mark of Finding (House Tharashk): *Identify* 1/day, *know direction* 2/day, or *locate object* 1/day; +2 bonus on Search checks.
- Least Mark of Handling (House Vadalis): *Calm animals* 1/day, *charm animal* 1/day, or *speak with animals* 1/day; +2

HOUSE CANNITH

The humans of House Cannith carry the Mark of Making, which grants the power to mend or fabricate material goods. Unmarked members of House Cannith are well-to-do artisans and, less often, mundane tinkers. Members of their Tinkers Guild often travel as widely as more traditional tinkers, stopping in villages to repair goods as they go.

HOUSE THARASHK

House Tharashk is a family of half-orcs and humans originally from the region around the Shadow Marches. Dragonmarked members of the family bear the Mark of Finding, which bestows powers related to locating creatures or objects, making those who carry it useful as investigators or bounty hunters.

HOUSE JORASCO

The halflings of House Jorasco carry the Mark of Healing, which grants curative magical powers. Unmarked members of House Jorasco are expertly trained in the healing arts, as well as in fields such as alchemy and herbalism. House Jorasco operates the Healers' Guild, which controls both the mundane and magical healing trades.

bonus on Handle Animal checks.

- Least Mark of Healing (House Jorasco): *Cure light wounds* 1/day or *lesser restoration* 1/day; +2 bonus on Heal checks.
- Least Mark of Hospitality (House Ghallanda): *Purify food and drink* 2/day, prestidigitation 2/day, or *unseen servant* 1/day; +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.
- Least Mark of Making (House Cannith): *Make whole* 1/day, *mending* 2/day, or *repair light damage* 1/day; +2 bonus on Craft checks.
- Least Mark of Passage (House Orien): *Expeditious retreat* 1/day, *mount* 1/day, or *dimension leap** 1/day; +2 bonus on Survival checks. (*see the *Eberron Campaign Setting*)
- Least Mark of Scribing (House Sivis): *Arcane mark* 2/day, *comprehend languages* 1/day, or *whispering wind* 1/day; +2 bonus on Decipher Script checks.
- Least Mark of Sentinel (House Deneith): *Mage armor* 1/day, *protection from arrows* 1/day, *shield of faith* 1/day, or *shield other* 1/day; +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks.
- Least Mark of Shadow (House Phiarlan or House Thuranni): *Darkness* 1/day, *disguise self* 1/day, or *minor image* 1/day; +2 bonus on Gather Information checks.
- Least Mark of Storm (House Lyrandar): *Endure elements* 1/day, *fog cloud* 1/day, or *gust of wind* 1/day; +2 bonus on Balance checks.
- Least Mark of Warding (House Kundarak): *Alarm* 1/day, *arcane lock* 1/day, *firetrap* 1/day, or *mis direction* 1/day; +2 bonus on Search checks.

In addition to the dragonmark feat tree (Least Dragonmark, Lesser Dragonmark, and Greater Dragonmark), other options, such as the Aberrant Mark feat and the heir of Siberys prestige class, offer characters dragonmarklike powers and abilities.

DRAGONMARK HEIR

The dragonmarked houses are a significant force in the politics and economics of Khorvaire, although their political influence is usually behind the scenes and often quite subtle. Perhaps as many as one person in a hundred has a blood connection to one of the twelve houses. Of these thousands, however, no more than half actually manifest a dragonmark. Even more rare are the individuals who demonstrate a natural ability to improve and use their dragonmark powers in ways that go well beyond others in their houses. These exceptional individuals are dragonmark heirs.

Dragonmark heirs have the ability to improve the dragonmarks they have manifested, and to develop additional abilities related to their dragonmarks. Dragonmark heir NPCs fill a wide variety of roles within the dragonmarked houses. To some extent, they command a degree of respect from unmarked members of the house, but a more powerful mark does not necessarily equate to a position of leadership. The economic realities of Khorvaire demand leadership from those with a keen mind for business, which does not necessarily go hand in hand with a more powerful dragonmark.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the dragonmark heir.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dragonmark heirs gain no proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields.

Lesser Dragonmark: A dragonmark heir manifests the lesser dragonmark of her house. She receives the Lesser Dragonmark feat as a bonus feat without having to meet the skill rank prerequisite.

House Status: A dragonmark heir

HOUSE LYRANDAR

The half-elves of House Lyrandar carry the Mark of Storm, which grants the power to control weather, primarily through the manipulation of clouds, wind, and rain. A character with this mark can create a localized drizzle or a powerful rainstorm, a light breeze or enough wind to propel a ship across the sea.

REQUIREMENTS

HIT DIE: D8

To qualify to become a dragonmark heir, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Member of appropriate dragonmarked race and house.

Skills: 7 ranks in any two skills.

Feats: Favored in House, Least Dragonmark.

CLASS SKILLS

The dragonmark heir's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

THE DRAGONMARK HEIR

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Lesser Dragonmark, house status
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Additional action points, improved least dragonmark
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Improved lesser dragonmark
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Greater Dragonmark
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Improved greater dragonmark

uses her level in this class as a bonus on all Charisma-related checks when dealing with members of her own house.

Additional Action Points: At 2nd level and beyond, a dragonmark heir's maximum action points per level is increased by 2.

Improved Least Dragonmark: Beginning at 2nd level, a dragonmark heir gains improved mastery of her least dragonmark. She can select a second spell-like ability associated with the least dragonmark for her house, or she can use the least dragonmark spell-like ability she already possesses one additional time per day.

Improved Lesser Dragonmark: Starting at 3rd level, a dragonmark heir gains improved mastery of her lesser dragonmark. She can select a second spell-like ability associated with the lesser dragonmark for her house, or she can use the lesser dragonmark spell-like ability she already possesses one additional time per day.

Greater Dragonmark: At 4th level, a dragonmark heir manifests the greater dragonmark of her house. She receives the Greater Dragonmark feat as a bonus feat without having to meet the skill rank prerequisite.

Improved Greater Dragonmark: At 5th level, a dragonmark heir gains improved mastery of her greater dragonmark. She can use the greater dragonmark spell-like ability she already possesses one additional time per day.

DRAGONSHARDS

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DEVELOPING DRAGONMARKS

All along, one of the central ideas behind EBERRON was to create a world where magic has been incorporated into society. At the same time, we needed magic items to remain expensive, while we also wanted to avoid having lots of NPCs using PC classes—thus, we didn't want a lot of high-level wizards in the world. So, where does the magic come from? One of the first changes was the introduction of the magewright, an NPC class with limited but economically useful spell-casting abilities. What about more powerful or dramatic magic? Ultimately, the idea for dragonmarks evolved.

In the very beginning, the idea was that every humanoid would have some sort of minor (0-level) magical gift, which he or she could build up through a special class. This made the world a little too chaotic and unfocused, so the idea was given a tighter focus: there would be twelve extended families, each of which possessed a specific magical gift. The powers of these dragonmarks have given each family an important place in the world. Because of their economic influence, the dragonmarked houses are powers that exist beyond the rule of princes or kings; think of the Spacing Guild from *Dune*. Wizards and sorcerers can duplicate the powers of the dragonmarked, but they are rare individuals. As a result, magical transportation, communication, espionage, security, and many other fields are dominated by one of the dragonmarked houses.

In addition to working well with the idea of magic in the game, dragonmarked houses help add intrigue and mystery, creating twelve powerful forces that can be found across the world, each of which has its own agenda . . . not to mention infighting within the houses themselves. The houses create a host of possible stories for DMs to draw on. It also gives player characters considerable story opportunities to explore. By taking a dragonmark, a character not only gets a special power, he also gets a tie to one of the major powers of the world—something that the DM can use to take a campaign in a variety of different directions.

These are only the beginning of what can be done with dragonmarks. Where did the dragonmarks come from? Why is each mark tied to a particular family and race? Is there some greater purpose for the dragonmarked? What about the legends of a lost thirteenth mark, or the strange aberrant marks that have been appearing more frequently of late? There are many stories waiting to be told!

—Keith Baker

that drift out of the mists of time, EBERRON is a world divided into three parts, each tied to a great dragon of legend. The encircling ring of shards high above the surface of the world is associated with the powerful dragon known as Siberys. The fathomless depths of the realms below the surface are linked with the mighty wyrm called Khyber. The third dragon is connected with the land that lies between the two—the surface of the world that also bears its name: Eberron.

Each of the three sections of the world produces mysterious stones and crystals known as dragonshards. Infused with arcane energy, these rare and hard-to-come-by crystals are used in a number of different ways, from empowering various dragonmarks to creating potent magic items to controlling powerful elementals. The region in which a dragonshard originates determines its appearance as well as the type of magic for which it has an affinity.

Siberys Shards

It is said that the Ring of Siberys, which circles high above the world of EBERRON, is composed entirely of dragonshards. When these Siberys shards fall from orbit, they usually land in regions near the planet's equator, such as Xen'drik. (It's rumored that vast fields of Siberys shards may be found in Argonnessen, although no known prospector or explorer has ever ventured to that distant realm to gain proof one way or another.) Veins of golden energy pulse through the depths of these clear crystals, which are sometimes called "sunstones" or "starmotes." Siberys shards are highly sought-after by dragonmarked individuals, as the shards have an affinity with the magic powers inherent in their dragonmarks. By attuning a shard to a particular dragonmark, it may be fashioned into a focus item that will enhance the spell-like abilities of that individual. Heirs of Siberys prize unattuned Siberys shards, as they can be used to power the unique magic abilities possessed by those individuals.

Inquisitive Goggles: A dragonshard is positioned between the lenses of these cumbersome goggles, making them a boon to the Tharashk inquisitive. To access the powers of the goggles, the wearer must possess the lesser, greater, or Siberys Mark of Finding. If this condition is met, the wearer can use the goggles to see the trace auras formed by the passage of living creatures. This has the following effects:

When examining an object, the wearer can make a Search check to identify the aura of the last living creature to touch the object. The DC is 15 + 1 per day since the last contact occurred. If the wearer is familiar with the being who left the aura he can match the two together; otherwise he can simply identify the creature's type. If he succeeds on the Search check by 10 or more, he also discerns the gender and race of the creature. If he succeeds by 20 or more, the creature counts as a "known or familiar creature" for purposes of the *locate creature* spell. Transmutation effects that alter the apparent race or type of a creature (such as *polymorph*, *shapechange*, or *alter self*) do fool the magic of the goggles, but illusion effects (such as *disguise self*) do not.

Once the wearer has identified an aura, he receives a +5 insight bonus on Survival checks made to track the creature that left the aura, as long as he continues wearing the goggles.

When the wearer uses *locate creature*, the goggles allow him to follow the recent movements of his target. Even if the target creature is not in range, if the target creature has passed through the spell's area in the last 24 hours the wearer can detect the path that she took.

The wearer receives a +2 insight bonus on Sense Motive checks while wearing the goggles.

Strong divination; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *find the path*, creator must have the Mark of Making; Price 16,000 gp.

Eberron Shards

Blood-red swirls of energy course through rose-tinted crystal of Eberron shards, which are sometimes referred to as "bloodstones." Most often found in clusters encased within geodes buried in soil (never in solid rock), Eberron shards are discovered throughout the world, making them the most common type of dragonshard. They are also the most versatile of the dragonshards. Eberron shards have an affinity with arcane magic, which makes them ideal vessels for crafting magic items and focuses of all types.

Eternal Wand: During the final years of the Last War, the artificers and wiz-

DEVELOPING DRAGONSHARDS

As early as Keith Baker's initial concept, there was the idea for a source of power that would be singularly part of EBERRON's make up. Originally, it was more mundane than magical, and seemed too much like oil from our world. So, the team got together and started discussing how to improve upon the concept (the team being Keith, James Wyatt, Chris Perkins, and myself). It wasn't long before dragonshards were born. At first, we had only one variety—dragonshards that fell from the Ring of Siberys that encircles the world. As time went on and our needs developed, we attached a different type of dragonshard to each of our "progenitor" dragons. Now, the Dragon Above, the Dragon Below, and the Dragon Between each provide a dragonshard variety, and each variety has a different look and a different function in the magical technologies of the world. For example, Khyber dragonshards, found in the depths of EBERRON's Underdark, appear as translucent crystals with writhing veins of midnight blue swirling within them. These dragonshards have binding properties and are used to trap demons and bind elementals into items, thus allowing for the creation of elemental-powered vehicles and weaponry. In EBERRON, dragonshards don't help you perform magic, they help you to make your magic better.

—Bill Slavicsek

The goal of dragonshards was to create a unique, magical resource required for most of the major, society-altering uses of magic. The existence of such a resource helps to explain the relatively limited presence of magic in the world, even after centuries of development. Airships, the lightning rail, message stones—dragonshards are used in all of these things. This is what prevents House Orien from connecting the lightning rail to every village and thorp in Khorvaire: they simply don't have enough dragonshards to establish coach paths. Aside from the effect on the economy of Khorvaire, dragonshards provide a host of options for dragonmarked characters. Dragonshard focuses can enhance the existing powers of a mark, or they can allow a character to use his mark in new ways. This creates a new form of treasure, and it provides the basis for a wide range of adventures, from lost or haunted mines to villainous masterminds scheming to gain control of hidden deposits.

—Keith Baker

ards of House Cannith perfected a new form of wand built around an Eberron shard. An *eternal wand* holds an arcane spell of 3rd level or lower with a maximum caster level of 6th. Unlike a traditional wand that holds 50 charges, an *eternal wand* allows any character who can cast arcane spells to use the spell contained in it twice per day.

The development of the *eternal wand* allowed magewrights to take the place of war wizards during the final days of the Last War, supplementing their passive spells with more aggressive magic. While the artificers of House Cannith have been searching for ways to streamline the process of creation, the technique is still in its infancy. Currently the wands are rarely seen outside of military units, but a few magewrights who served in the war brought their *eternal wands of magic missile* home from the front lines.

Eternal wand (0-level spell): Faint (any school); CL 1st; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, the spell contained in the eternal wand; Price 460 gp.

Eternal wand (1st-level spell): Faint (any school); CL 1st; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, the spell contained in the eternal wand; Price 820 gp.

Eternal wand (2nd-level spell): Faint (any school); CL 3rd; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, the spell contained in the eternal wand; Price 4,420 gp.

Eternal wand (3rd-level spell): Faint (any school); CL 5th; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, the spell contained in the eternal wand; Price 10,900 gp.

Khyber Shards

Deep underground, within treacherous volcanic caverns, Khyber shards may be found growing on the walls—often near magma pools or sulfur vents. While Khyber shards can be found in such an environment anywhere throughout EBERRON'S Underdark, they are most common in areas linked to fiendish or elemental activity. Veins of energy that shift from midnight blue to an oily black throb within these smoky crystals, which are also known as "nightshards" or "demonstones." Khyber shards have a strong affinity for the type of magic used for binding creatures, making them ideal for use in binding diagrams, casting *trap the soul* (and similar spells), and crafting items empowered by elementals.

Elemental Galleon: The elemental galleon is a vessel that uses a bound air elemental to propel it at great speed over the water. In basic shape, an elemental galleon is similar to a huge galley, but a massive tower rises from the rear portion of the vessel, supporting the Huge air elemental bound into the form of a ring. The vessel actually runs on two finlike structures. The bound elemental propels the galleon at a speed of 20 miles per hour across calm seas. An elemental galleon requires a crew of 20 and can carry 150 tons of cargo.

Strong conjuration; CL 15th; Bind Elemental, *greater planar binding*; Price 64,000 gp.

The exciting, new *EBERRON Campaign Setting* should be prominently displayed on the shelves of your favorite bookstore or hobby shop this month. Once you've got it in your hands and have started to explore the world of EBERRON, you'll want to keep looking in *DRAGON* for more material, insight, and articles. D

ON BENDED KNEE

The *EBERRON Campaign Setting* hits the shelves this month, but a few players got a special sneak peak at the setting at a convention in February. In the photo above, you can see a hunchbacked Kieth Baker, author of the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*, imitating a hunchbacked vampire during an EBERRON adventure he ran for Greg Wassinger, Tim Hitchcock, Shannon Caravello, Carol Hooper, Dmitry Aginsky, and Carl Smith.

"I do recall that one of the players in one of my demo sessions was taking pictures. They were a good group," said Keith.

"During the session, a member of the party ended up separated from the group and hauled before the vampire commanding the enemy forces. The player's character pretended to be a messenger, and in the photo the vampire has instructed him to deliver his message—on his knees. He did an admirable job of thinking on (or off) his feet, and managed to bluff things out long enough for his companions to arrive and rescue him. The vampire was described as 'a tall, hunched figure.' Hence my posture."

by Clifford Horowitz

images provided by Blizzard Entertainment

Racial Transformations

Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne picks up several months after the death of Archimonde, the warlord of an army of demons known as the Burning Legion. With the demons' defeat, the conquered lands set about freeing themselves from the remnants of the fiendish hordes and rebuilding from the titanic war. However, an ancient threat, forgotten by all but one tormented hero, rises to claim a place in this new world. Thus, the repercussions of *Warcraft III's* climatic finale are carried directly into a new plot of twisted alliances and mistaken enemies that proves to be just as dynamic as its predecessor.

In the midst of its storyline, *The Frozen Throne* presents species-spanning consequences to the recent events in Azeroth and Kalimdor, introducing the concept of racial transformation. While not specifically called this in the game, this phenomenon manifests itself twice in the saga. First, after the destruction of the high elf homeland of Quel'Thalas, the elves discover their addiction to the innate magic of that ruined land, causing them to become the moody, vengeful blood elves. Later, the past of the serpentlike naga race reveals them to be cursed night elves, banished to the depths after consorting with demons during the first war with the Burning Legion.

This concept of racial transformation already exists in D&D, with such ancient evolutionary offshoots as the drow from elves, derro from dwarves, and githyanki and githzerai from humans. Although this type of gradual transformation is perhaps too slow for most campaigns, the idea of a sudden and dramatic racial shift is certainly an interesting way to make an old campaign new again. Races don't evolve overnight, but traumatic circumstances like massive natural disasters, a collapsing empire, or the loss of an ancient homeland can radically affect a people in less than a single lifetime. While these circumstances are merely natural or cultural, with powerful magical elements thrown in, the possibilities for racial transformation are nearly limitless.

DIVINE CHANGE

Divine change does not just mean a race's transformation is the product of divine redesign. Rather, it could be the transformation of a race because of the personal changes of a god. Due to the close tie between the god and its mortal followers, the worshipping race reflects the changes in its patron deity.

This option works best with races that believe they were personally created by their deity. A close relationship is nice, but those who believe they represent their god's craftsmanship are more likely to be affected by a divine change. For example, in many D&D worlds, dwarves believe their gods forged them and placed them in the world, while in *Warcraft*, night elves gained their immortality as a boon from the gods and their blessed world tree.

Because this type of transformation ties the metamorphosis of a race to the personal changes of a single or small number of beings, the types of changes are nearly limitless. This makes specific guidelines hard to come by, but it also opens up the doors to make the most radical changes with little further explanation.

For example, orcs and elves are eternal enemies, due mostly to the animosity between their chief gods, but what if they were actually once the same race, and Grummsh is a fallen elven deity much like Lolth? Wounded by Corellon Larethian, Grummsh let his hatred and jealousy twist him into the ugly, evil being the world knows him as now, and his elven followers twisted with him, trading their grace for savage hatred. This brings up a number of possible implications. Orcs that reject Grummsh and return to the fold of Corellon Larethian might begin to slowly revert to an elven state. Additionally, orcs might possess the elf-blooded ability,

and elves the orc-blooded ability, for the purposes of using and being affected by the most ancient items and spells created before the split between Grummsh and Corellon Larethian.

RACE IN DECLINE

Many fantasy settings establish elves as a race in decline, with their zenith already passed, although any ancient culture makes a fine candidate for this option. *Warcraft* takes this idea a step further with many of Kalimdor's night elves having withdrawn into an extended state of hibernation and with the naga in a centuries-long torpor at the bottom of the sea.

This might be a gradual change, but when the decline removes some key magical abilities that define a race, the change is indeed quite sudden. Continuing with the elven example, even with a gradual decline, the loss of power could eventually rob the race of their natural ties to magic and nature. Elves who feel the effects of age at 50 years instead of 200, who no longer blithely shrug off enchantments and magical sleep, and who must sleep for eight hours a day are suddenly a very different people. This is especially true if their combat prowess significantly increases as a portion of their race refuses to go quietly into shadow.

TOUCH FROM BEYOND

In this option, representatives of a race agree to bind themselves to an outsider, deity, or other powerful creature, infusing the entire race with a surge of power but making them beholden to their new patron. Such an otherworldly influence can be seen in *Warcraft* with the orcs' original corruptive alliances with the Burning Legion. While many magical races already have a close tie to their patron deities, this option assumes a tie to another power. Maybe the old patron no longer favors the race, is dead, or is otherwise no longer available. The mortals that remain forge a tie to another extraplanar creature or magical power to fill the void left by the passing of their former patron.

D&D provides a simple way to represent the sudden and heavy touch of outsiders on a given people: templates. Applying a template to members of a race not only gives

them a strong new flavor, but does so in a mechanically simple way. Just apply the template, complete with level adjustment, to the racial modifications for a given race, and you have your new race ready to go. Characters who undergo this sort of transformation likely incur a level adjustment. How you address this power shift should tie into the source of the template.

RACIAL REDESIGN OPTIONS

Below are some examples of player character races that have endured some fundamental change. Their abilities and powers have been altered to compensate for their specific change or loss, but none are significant enough to give the race a level adjustment. Although a possible reasoning for their transformation is presented with each race, feel free to change this background to whatever events best suit your character or campaign.

Exiled Dwarves

Losing too many ancestral holdings to feral humanoids and their giant allies, the dwarves find all their great tales, records, and clan histories lost or destroyed. Estranged from their ancestors and the earth that holds them, the dwarven reliance on tradition weakens. This loss impacts the race deeply, both physically and mentally. No longer a subterranean race tied to the earth by bonds of history, they begin losing their affinity for natural stonework, their stony resilience, and their rocklike stability.

Ever an industrious and inventive people, the dwarves dedicate themselves to reclaiming everything they lost with all the rugged determination one expects from their race. Although initially softened by being severed from their past, the dwarves work the toughness back into their frames through hard work and dedication. Stoking the fires within themselves instead of the forge, they learn to turn the emotional turmoil of their loss into yet another weapon. No matter how much they gain to compensate for their loss, every dwarf has but one dream: to use these new tools to reclaim their old position within the earth, that they may cast aside these crutches and return to the way things should be.

Exiled dwarves lose the following abilities from the *Player's Handbook*:

- Darkvision.
- Stonecunning.
- Stability.
- +2 racial bonus to resist poison.
- +2 racial bonus to resist magic.

Exiled dwarves gain or change the following abilities:

- 1 extra feat at first level, as dwarves have lost much of their natural stubbornness and become more open to new ideas.
- +2 racial bonus on attack and damage rolls against orcs and goblinoids (this is instead of the usual +1 bonus). Now more than ever, dwarves strive to eradicate those who drove them from their homelands.
- +6 dodge bonus to Armor Class against monsters of the giant type, instead of the usual +4 bonus.
- Favored Class: Barbarian. A multiclass dwarf's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing (see

XP for Multiclass Characters in the *Player's Handbook*, page 60). Dwarven vengefulness and rage now suits the race more than the discipline of hardened fighters.

Declining Elves

Elves find the magic that once so freely ran through their veins inexorably waning. The words of power now come no more easily to them than any other race. To make matters worse, it is this same magic that sustained them through the centuries. Cut off from its flow, elves now wither and age at a horrifying rate, robbing them of precious decades to study ever more difficult magical lore.

However, they still retain their culture and traditions, and elves are known as much for their swordwork and archery as they are for their spellcraft. Death's unprecedented proximity sparks a passion such as the elves have never known, and they throw themselves into the refinement of their martial skills with the fervor of those about to enter a battle they know they cannot win but are determined to die fighting.

Declining elves lose the following abilities from the *Player's Handbook*:

- Immunity to sleep effects.
- Racial bonus to saves against enchantment spells or effects.
- Lifespan; elves now age as half-elves.
- Elves can no longer enter their restful trances and must sleep 8 hours a day like other races.

Declining elves gain or change the following abilities:

- Weapon Focus: Elves receive the Weapon Focus feat in one melee and one ranged weapon. These weapon choices must come from the weapons elves receive free Martial Weapon Proficiency in (longsword, rapier, longbow, shortbow).
- Favored Class: Ranger. A multiclass elf's ranger class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing (see XP for Multiclass Characters in the *Player's Handbook*, page 60). With the decline of their natural magical power, elves embrace the power of their beloved wilderness even more tightly.

Techno Gnomes

These prank-loving tinkerers are similar to elves in that they have a mix of magical and mundane abilities. However, a series of dramatic scientific advances brings the race into a new age of technological enlightenment. In embracing their new sciences, they allow their innate magical powers to wither.

As their scientific skills increase, gnomes lose their interest and pleasure in illusions, and they find their natural affinity for such magic evaporating. However, their increased inventiveness and mechanical skill compensate for such a loss.

Techno gnomes lose the following abilities from the *Player's Handbook*:

- Bonus to saves against illusions.
- +1 to theDC to all illusion spells cast by gnomes.
- All spell-like abilities.

Techno gnomes gain or change the following abilities:

- Alertness: Gnomes gain the Alertness feat for free at 1st level. No longer able to tell instinctually what is real and what is an illusion, gnomes sharpen their already acute senses.
- +2 racial bonus to Craft, Disable Device, and Open Lock checks: As gnome technological prowess far outstrips any other race's, they have an innate understanding of all things mechanical.
- Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass gnome's rogue class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing (see XP for Multiclass Characters in the *Player's Handbook*, page 60). The rogue class presents many more opportunities for gnomes to put their newly honed knowledge of mechanical devices to work.

Unsheltered Halflings

Halflings don't have much in the way of magical ability, but they certainly seem to live charmed lives. Strangely resilient to fear and often able to escape the dangerous repercussions of rash decisions, halflings possess a

mix of abilities that allow them to glide through life without thought to consequences—assuming they don't get too foolish, of course.

However, with the advent of some great calamity or racial awakening, this supernatural luck is the first thing to go. Suddenly faced with dangers that fate previously shielded them from, the halflings become a more somber, less carefree people. Now they have reason to consider their actions, to use forethought, and to fear.

No longer graced with supernatural protection, these unsheltered halflings must quickly learn how to provide protection for themselves or cease adventuring altogether. Since reclaiming the race's former favor from fate could be the greatest adventure of all, few let such hard training deter them.

Unsheltered halflings lose the following abilities from the *Player's Handbook*:
- Racial bonus on saving throws.
- Morale bonus to resist fear.

Unsheltered halflings gain or change the following abilities:
- Dodge: Halflings gain the Dodge feat for free at 1st level, as they are forced to rely more on themselves to stay out of harm's way.
- Bonus Feat: At 3rd level, halflings select one of the following feats to gain as a bonus feat: Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, or Great Fortitude. No longer relying on their innate luck, halflings develop more potent defenses.

Complacent Humans

In their minds, the humans have won. The frontiers have been explored, the wilds tamed, and every perceived enemy defeated. With their peaceful cities expanding and the wealth of the world's farthest reaches flowing eagerly in, the pinnacles of human achievement have been reached.

Decadence and complacency are swift to take root in the human soul. Confident in the power they hold and the riches they've earned, human civilization shifts, resting on its laurels rather than fighting to protect what it has. This decadence leads to some great advances, since money buys humanity not only luxury, but fine education in both physical and mental pursuits. However, these scholars and athletes lack the drive of their predecessors and accomplish much only because of the advantages their situation grants them, not because of their own excellence.

Complacent humans lose the following abilities from the *Player's Handbook*:
- Bonus feat at 1st level.
- Bonus skill points at 1st and subsequent levels.

Complacent humans gain or change the following abilities:
- Apply a +2 racial bonus to one ability score. Decadent humans are known to train their bodies for sport and beauty, or their minds for intellectual debate, but they no longer care much for the real world applications of their abilities. Thus they tend to be talented, but not particularly accomplished.
- Favored Class: Bard. A multiclass human's bard class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing (see XP for Multiclass Characters in the *Player's Handbook*, page 60). With a definite preference for style over substance, humans make skilled but uncommitted bards. D

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Most of this article deals with the repercussions of a massive change—a change that, as a player, you are most likely powerless to bring about or prevent. However, that doesn't stop you from introducing the idea to your DM. If you want to play one of the racial variants presented here, try suggesting to your DM that your character comes from an isolated subrace of the standard race.

For example, not all elves need be affected by a loss of magic. Perhaps your character comes from an elven subrace that suffered from a calamity that severed their tie to magic, making them declining elves, but leaving the better-known elves unscathed. Any event traumatic enough to alter a race can be localized to afflict a smaller population.

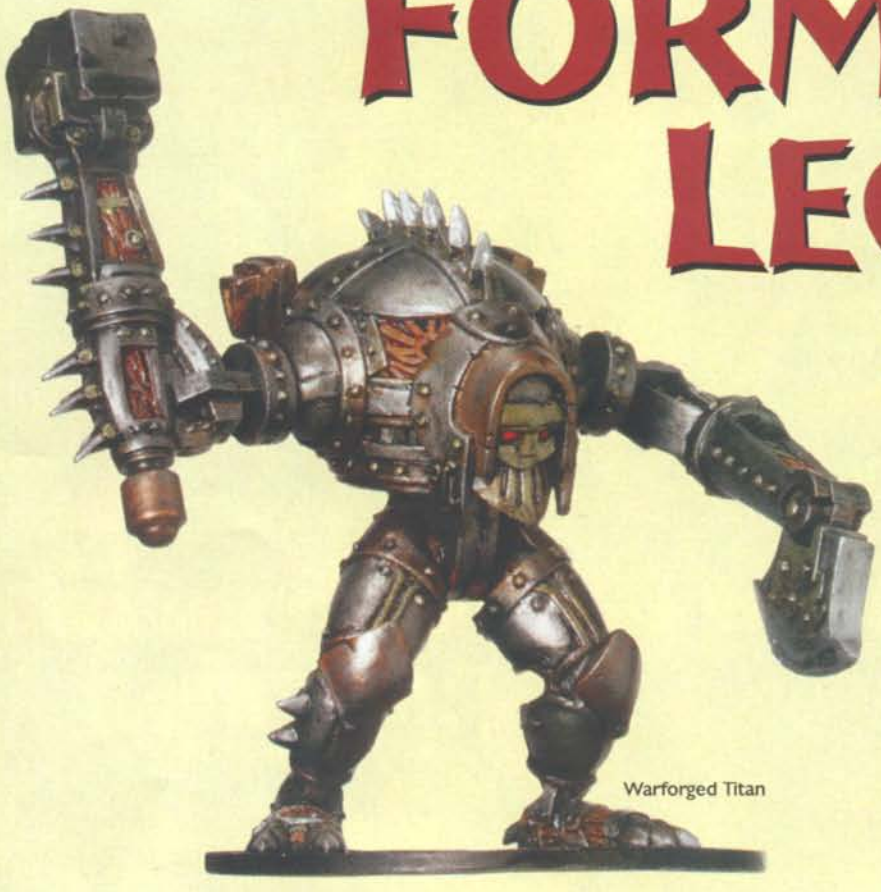
FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

The subraces derived from a loss of magic all share that tie and so fit together nicely in a world suffering from an overall degradation of magic. If you're interested in running a campaign with lower magic content than standard D&D, these races might provide a nice starting point. While still providing players with familiar racial options, they easily fit in a low magic world.

Of course, if you are currently running a campaign and don't wish to scrap it for a new idea, but still find the idea interesting enough to use, you can introduce some sort of natural or magical degradation into your existing world. This allows you to have a sweeping change take hold suddenly (the loss of old racial abilities), but still have lingering consequences (the rise of the new abilities). It also gives your players a chance to help decide the path of the altered race (aiding in choosing their new skills) and helping cultivate their new place and the changed world.

FORMS OF LEGEND

by Jesse Decker
images provided by Wizards of the Coast
all images actual size



Warforged Titan

A SHAPECHANGING GIANTS OF LEGEND PREVIEW

Alter self, disguise self, polymorph, shapechange, and wild shape are just a few of the ways that a D&D character can change his shape or appearance. Despite this list of options, the new *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* line shows that countless other options exist for spellcasters of a wide range of levels, especially if they choose forms they can easily represent on the tabletop with a new miniature. This article presents a new series of spells that opens up a few of the most interesting options, allowing low- and mid-level spellcasters a greater range of forms and form-changing spells.

In this article, you'll also get a look at a few of the miniatures from the upcoming *Giants of Legend* expansion, including two of the new Huge-sized creatures, the Bulette and the Warforged Titan.

Aspect of the Earth Hunter

Transmutation
Level: Drd 6
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 10 min./level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a bulette (see the *Monster Manual,* page 30). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to magical beast, and your size changes to Huge. You have the space and reach of a bulette (15 ft./10 ft.). You gain the

Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of an average bulette (Str 27, Dex 15, Con 20), but you retain your own mental ability scores. Your base land speed becomes 40 feet, and you gain a burrow speed of 10 feet. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You also gain low-light vision, scent, and tremorsense to 60 feet. Your class and level, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, and base saving throw bonuses all remain the same. You lose any extraordinary special abilities of your own form, as well as spell-like and supernatural abilities. You keep all extraordinary special attacks derived from class levels (such as a barbarian's rage or a rogue's sneak attack), but you lose any from your normal form that are not derived from class levels. You cannot speak or cast spells while in bulette form. However, if you have the Natural Spell feat, you may cast spells normally. Your natural armor bonus becomes +12, regardless of any natural armor bonus from your normal form. You can make two claw attacks, which are natural weapons that deal 2d8+8 points of damage. While in bulette form, you gain the bulette's leap extraordinary attack form, allowing you to make four claw attacks instead of two. Your equipment melds into your new form and becomes nonfunctional.

Material Component: A small piece of a bulette's armored shell.

Aspect of the Wolf

Transmutation
Level: Drd 1, Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 10 min./level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a wolf (see the *Monster Manual,* page 283). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to animal, and your size changes to Medium. You have the space and reach of a wolf (5 ft./5 ft.). You gain the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of an average wolf (Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15), but you retain your own mental ability scores. Your base land speed becomes 50 feet. You gain low-light vision and scent. You gain a bite attack, which is a primary natural attack that deals 1d6+1 points of damage with each successful hit. Your class and level, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, and base saving throw bonuses all remain the same. You lose any extraordinary special abilities of your own form, as well as spell-like and supernatural abilities. You keep all extraordinary special attacks derived from class levels (such as a barbarian's rage or a rogue's sneak attack), but you lose any from your normal form that are not derived from class levels. You cannot speak or cast spells while in wolf form. However, if you have the Natural Spell feat, you may cast spells normally. Your natural armor bonus becomes +2, regardless of any natural armor bonus from your normal form. While in wolf form, you gain the wolf's trip extraordinary attack form, allowing you to make a free trip attempt against any opponent that you hit with your bite attack. Your equipment melds into your new form and becomes nonfunctional.

Arcane Material Component: A whisker from a wolf.

Body of War

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a warforged titan (see the *Eberron Campaign Setting*). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to construct, and your size changes to Huge. You have the space and reach of a warforged titan (15 ft./15 ft.). Your mindset changes so that you relish combat and cannot cast spells, even from magic items. You gain the Strength and Dexterity scores of an average warforged titan (Str 28, Dex 8), but you retain your own mental ability scores. You have no Constitution score while affected by this spell. Your base land speed becomes 50 feet. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You also gain low-light vision. Your class and level, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, and base saving throw bonuses all remain the same. You lose any extraordi-

NEW SPELLS

The sheer versatility of spells like *alter self, polymorph,* and *polymorph any object* grant characters a nearly endless variety of forms, but such spells restrict access to the special qualities and special attacks granted by those forms to preserve game balance. The new spells presented here remove these limits by giving characters full access to the powers of a single creature, trading versatility for special abilities.

Cleric Spells
4th-Level Cleric Spells
Holy Transformation, Lesser: Take on aspects of a protectar for 1 round/level.
Infernal Transformation, Lesser: Take on aspects of a bearded devil for 1 round/level.
7th-Level Cleric Spells
Holy Transformation: Take on aspects of a hound archon for 1 round/level.
Infernal Transformation: Take on aspects of a bone devil for 1 round/level.

Druid Spells
1st-Level Druid Spells
Aspect of the Wolf: Transform into a wolf for 10 min./level.
3rd-Level Druid Spells
Primal Form: Transform into a Medium elemental for 1 min./level.
4th-Level Druid Spells
Wild Runner: Transform into a centaur for 10 min./level.
6th-Level Druid Spells
Aspect of the Earth Hunter: Transform into a bulette for 10 min./level.

Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
1st-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Aspect of the Wolf: Transform into a wolf for 10 min./level.
3rd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Primal Form: Transform into a Medium elemental for 1 min./level.
4th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Displacer Form: Transform into a displacer beast for 1 round/level.
6th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Body of War: Transform into a warforged titan for 1 round/level.

nary special abilities of your own form, as well as spell-like and supernatural abilities. You keep all extraordinary special attacks derived from class levels (such as a barbarian's rage or a rogue's sneak attack), but you lose any from your normal form that are not derived from class levels. You cannot speak or cast spells while in warforged titan form. Your natural armor bonus becomes +18, regardless of any natural armor bonus from your normal form. As a construct, you have the following qualities: immunity to all mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromancy effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, energy drain, and to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless). You also gain the warforged titan's two attack forms (axe and maul), along with the trample special ability (damage 1d8+13; Reflex half DC 25). The warforged titan's axe deals 2d8 points of slashing damage and has a x3 critical modifier; its maul (essentially a huge warhammer) deals 2d8 points of bludgeoning damage and also has a x3 critical modifier. Your equipment melds into your new form and becomes nonfunctional.

Material Component: A miniature bronze hammer.

Displacer Form

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a displacer beast (see the *Monster Manual*, page 66). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to magical beast, and your size changes to Large. You have the space and reach of a displacer beast (15 ft./5 ft. [10 ft. with tentacles]). You gain the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of an average displacer beast (Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16), but you retain your own mental ability scores. Your base land speed becomes 40 feet. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You also gain low-light vision. Your class and level, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, and base saving throw bonuses all remain the same. You lose any spell-like abilities of your own form, and you lose any extraordinary special abilities from your own form. You retain any supernatural abilities of your own form. You keep all extraordinary special attacks derived from class levels (such as a barbarian's rage or a rogue's sneak attack), but you lose any from your normal form that are not derived from class levels. You can speak and cast spells while in displacer beast form, but you must physically touch any necessary material components. Your natural armor bonus becomes +5, regardless of any natural armor bonus from your normal form. While in displacer beast form, you gain the displacer beast's displacement and resistance to ranged attacks abilities. Your equipment melds into your new form and becomes nonfunctional.

Material Component: A single claw from a displacer beast.

Holy Transformation

Transmutation [Good]
Level: Clr 7
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a hound archon (see the *Monster Manual*, page 16). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to outsider (archon, good, lawful), and your size changes to Medium. You have the space and reach of a hound archon (5 ft./5 ft.). You gain a +4 sacred bonus to Strength and Constitution. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You gain a +4 sacred bonus on all saving throws. You gain damage reduction 5/evil. Evil creatures within 10 feet of you suffer a -2 penalty to attacks and saving throws. You gain the ability to speak and understand Celestial.

Holy Transformation, Lesser

Transmutation [Good]
Level: Clr 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a protectar (see the *Miniatures Handbook*, page 66). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to outsider (good), and your size changes to Medium. You have the space and reach of a protectar (5 ft./5 ft.). You gain a +2 sacred bonus to Strength and Constitution. You gain a fly speed of 60 feet, with good maneuverability. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You gain a +2 sacred bonus on all saving throws. You gain the ability to speak and understand Celestial.

Infernal Transformation

Transmutation [Evil]
Level: Clr 7
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a bone devil (see the *Monster Manual*, page 52). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to outsider (baatezu, evil, lawful), and your size changes to Large. You have the space and reach of a bone devil (5 ft./10 ft.). You gain a +4 profane bonus to Strength and Constitution. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You gain damage reduction 5/good.

You also grow a tail like a scorpion's. Whenever you take the full-attack action, you can use the tail to make an additional attack each round at your highest attack bonus. A successful

attack deals 3d4 points of damage, plus Strength modifier. This attack overcomes damage reduction as if it were an evil weapon. Creatures hit by the tail attack must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 character level + Constitution modifier) or be subjected to poison (injury, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str). Your equipment grows to match your new size and form, allowing the tail attack to function even if you are wearing heavy armor or other restrictive clothing. You gain the ability to speak and understand Infernal.

Infernal Transformation, Lesser

Transmutation [Evil]
Level: Clr 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a bearded devil (see the *Monster Manual,* page 52). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to outsider (baatezu, evil, lawful), and your size changes to Medium. You have the space and reach of a bearded devil (5 ft./5 ft.). You gain a +2 profane bonus to Strength and Constitution. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness.

You grow a snaky beard. Whenever you take the full-attack action, you can use the beard to make an additional attack each round at your highest attack bonus plus all appropriate modifiers. A successful attack deals 1d8 points of damage, plus Strength modifier. This attack overcomes damage reduction as if it were an evil weapon. Creatures hit by the beard attack must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 character level + Constitution modifier) or be affected by the devil chills disease (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). You gain the ability to speak and understand Infernal.

Primal Form

Transmutation
Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, DF/F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 min./level (D)

When you cast this spell, choose an element (air, earth, fire, or water). You assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a Medium elemental of the chosen element (see the *Monster Manual,* pages 95-100). *Primal form* also grants you the elemental subtype appropriate to the chosen element.

You gain a +4 bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects. You gain a 25% resistance to critical hits and sneak attacks, as if you were wearing armor with the light fortification special property (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). You cannot cast spells, and you lose any spell-like, supernatural, and extraordinary abilities of your own form. You gain additional abilities depending on the element that you chose when you cast the spell:

Air: Fly speed 20 feet (perfect)
Earth: DR 5/–
Fire: 1d4 fire damage, fire resistance 10, burn
Water: Swim 90 feet, drench

Your equipment melds into your new form and becomes nonfunctional.

Wild Runner

Transmutation
Level: Drd 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 10 min./level (D)

When you cast this spell, you assume the physical appearance and many of the qualities and abilities of a centaur (see the *Monster Manual,* page 32). While under the effects of the spell, your creature type changes to monstrous humanoid, and your size changes to Large. You have the space and reach of a centaur (10 ft./5 ft.). You gain the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of an average centaur (Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15), but you retain your own mental ability scores. Your base land speed becomes 50 feet. You gain darkvision, granting you the ability to see 60 feet even in total darkness. You may still use any extraordinary, spell-like, and supernatural abilities possessed by your normal form. You gain all the advantages of a quadruped form (greater carrying capacity, +4 bonus to resist trip attacks, and so on); this includes the ability to fight effectively while carrying a rider. You may still use your equipment and cast spells normally. D

Bulette

DM's Toolbox

DUNGEON DESIGN AND THE ART OF SIMPLICITY
FUN DUNGEONS

by Johnn Four

Sometimes, when DMs put too much pressure on themselves to craft original, realistic environments, dungeon crawls just stop being fun. Players start to dread the next multi-level labyrinth, seemingly endless complexes that drag on for session after session. Characters yawn as they prepare to bash down yet another door, especially once they know what they're going to find or caught on to the dungeon's theme two-dozen rooms back. However there are easy ways to put the excitement and entertainment back into dungeon play, all while keeping it realistic and memorable.

DUNGEON DESIGN TIPS

Your first and best opportunity to make a dungeon fun is during the design stage. At this point, you don't have a table full of players putting pressure on you, no dramatic decisions are set in stone, and you can reflect carefully on what would be fun to play. Consider adding some of the following techniques and options to your toolbox when designing your next crawl.

The Five-Room Dungeon

Rejuvenate dungeon play by making crawls smaller. Plodding through caves and hallways without respite for several game sessions can tire even the most enthusiastic dungeon delver. Consider changing your dungeons from large, multi-level constructs to small, sleek designs. Your players will enjoy more frequent successes and increased variety. You'll benefit from faster, easier designs and greater campaign flexibility. Imagine a game where the PCs manage to accomplish two or three distinct quests in one evening!

An easy, efficient, and enjoyable design formula is the five-room layout. Craft your dungeon using just five encounters that each have their own special purpose. Design should take less than an hour and can provide up to an entire evening's entertainment. The smaller scale provides more opportunities to optimize things and make every element count. Unexpected character decisions minimize planning risks as you'll be able to create multiple dungeons in the same amount of time the large crawl used to take, and the compact format makes dropping or moving adventures much easier.

Designing a five-room dungeon is a fun puzzle in itself. Each room has a special purpose that supports the whole design. Your job is to determine what each of these pieces consists of and how they fit together to form a fun adventure.

Room 1: Entrance and Gatekeeper

Where and how will the PCs enter your dungeon, and what is the barrier to their entry? The entrance should make an impact by setting the tone, issuing a warning, or making a statement about the adventure ahead. Dress it up and add interesting details to hook your players right away. In addition, place a guardian or a trap. A guardian starts the adventure off with exciting action, and a trap can add tension. They also help explain why the dungeon hasn't been successfully pillaged or explored before. Whether the foe and trap are triggered separately or together, the room should engage the whole group and start things off in an exciting way.

5 ENTRANCES AND GATEKEEPERS

1. The entrance to this ancient temple is sculpted as the maw of a giant, striking snake. In the eyes and ridges within the mouth nest dozens of constrictor snakes.
2. The door to the dungeon lies in the floor of a deep chute, directly on top of which lurks a gelatinous cube.
3. Several sturdy cords dangle from the entrance of this cliff-side tunnel. Unfortunately, these are actually the strands of two ropers that lurk just within.
4. This dungeon's entrance is behind the waterfall of a spring, but the nymph that lives in the area refuses to let the adventurers defile the waters by passing through.
5. The gatekeeper is the gate, an iron golem constructed to completely block the way into the dungeon.

Room 2: Roleplaying Challenge

The next encounter should be one where the players have an opportunity to roleplay. Depending on your players' style, this can be a diplomatic encounter or a chance for players to portray their character's skills and abilities. Ensure each character receives some spotlight time. You are welcome to add a combat conflict here as long as you work some roleplaying in as well.

5 ROLEPLAYING CHALLENGES

1. Convincing a fearful prisoner he can leave with the PCs.
2. Befriending a monster.
3. An insult contest—if the PCs win, they can proceed.
4. Entreating a tribal leader to trade for indigenous healing herbs.
5. Finding common ground with a foe and exchanging information.

Room 3: Red Herring

The purpose of this room is to build tension and surprise the players with a twist. The characters think they've found the treasure, encountered the boss, or achieved their goal only to learn that they've been tricked. Red herrings keep everyone alert and uncertain, preventing players from falling into dull exploration routines. Puzzles and traps can be part of red herrings, assuring that this encounter remains fresh and unpredictable. Another potentially strategic payoff of this room is to weaken the PCs before the climax.

5 RED HERRINGS

1. At an intersection, glimmering lights lead to a red herring combat while the dark passage leads to the big conflict.
2. The room contains a fake sarcophagus and another guardian.
3. A secret door locked with a cunning puzzle leads to a trapped, though unimportant room.
4. The room contains a tough creature and some minor treasure, hopefully fooling the PCs to leave the real treasure and guardian alone.
5. The room appears to bring the PCs closer to their goal but actually contains a one-way exit out of the location into another creature's lair.

Room 4: The Big Conflict

This room contains the toughest challenge of the dungeon. Hopefully, clues and signs planted in previous rooms have built up worry and tension in anticipation of this final fight. The big conflict can be a single tough monster, a number of creatures, multiple waves of enemies, or even complex trap, creating an encounter with an EL equal to or exceeding the party's. Try to make the environment interesting, employ unusual terrain features or hindrances, engage all the PCs, and provide opportunities for PCs to gain a tactical advantage so thinking players will be rewarded.

5 BIG CONFLICTS

1. A spirit naga lurks in the tight tunnels that wind through the walls of this room, using them for defense as it harasses the PCs.
2. This chamber is a charnel house of ancient bones, disguising a mohrg that waits for the PCs to near.
3. Twin ogres at the top of a cavernous shaft beat stalactites off the ceiling onto the PCs climbing to face them.
4. Before a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire, a priest of a fiery deity faces the PCs while rasts flood through the portal every round.
5. The behir that lairs in this room lurks above the entrance, waiting to blast the PCs with its breath weapon.

Room 5: The Resolution

Once they've defeated the dungeon's greatest threat, it's time for the group to reap its reward. Sometimes this means a pile of loot suited to the challenge. Other times it's achieving a goal or opening up a new opportunity. Regardless, there should be a tangible representation of the party's victory, from treasure and magic items to a clue to an ongoing mystery.

However, victory can also mean the party must face the consequences of its actions. The five-room model allows for many permutations, and rewards can be double-edged. For example, your dungeon might have been home to a powerful monster unwittingly responsible for maintaining a precarious balance in the region. Now that the creature is gone, its prey is free to multiply and cause new problems. Considering the far-reaching effects of the PCs' actions and causing the players to do the same makes adventuring more dynamic and the campaign world seem more real.

5 RESOLUTIONS

1. The PCs loot the defeated warlord's weapons and armor, claiming among them an intelligent chaotic evil longsword.
2. With the defeat of a voracious purple worm, the local ankheg population grows tremendously.
3. Although the cult leader was defeated, the bebilith he had charmed is now free and rampages through the city.
4. Among the documents kept by a corrupt noble are files implicating dozens of other governing officials in his traitorous schemes.
5. Upon defeating the dragon, the PCs claim its mountainous hoard of treasure as their own.

Establish A Clear Goal

Players enjoy gaming with a specific dungeon goal in mind. Goals unify the party and minimize typical session killers such as unfocused decision-making and time-consuming disagreements. Sometimes players agree on a course of action just to get the game moving again, but having a compelling goal should get them all to eagerly pursue a specific course. In addition, adventuring with a purpose gears game play toward doing what needs to be done and efficiently achieving the goal. Secret rooms in dungeons and extra exploration become bonuses, lengthy or needless combats are avoided, and making Search checks every 5 feet "just because" is discouraged. Also, when the party has a goal and achieves it, they have a success to celebrate and the characters gain a feeling of confidence and completion, making play crisp and exciting.

Give Dungeon Levels Themes

If your complex has multiple sections, stages, or levels, give each a distinct theme. This lets players know they're progressing and makes dungeons distinguishable and memorable. Before you design specific rooms, create a theme for the major areas to help give you ideas and inspiration for encounters, details, and dressing. For example, if your location is an abandoned sanitarium, make a list of possible areas first, such as the residents' wing, staff area, medical wing, solitary confinement, garden, and solarium. Then you might roughly fit these together on a map like a jigsaw puzzle. When the time comes to design specific rooms, floor plans, and encounters, you have a wonderful, themed plan in place to make each item distinct and entertaining.

5 THEME IDEAS

1. A common creature type.
2. Color of building materials, dressing, or denizen uniforms.
3. Elements, such as ice, wind, dust, and lava.
4. Building materials, type, and architecture.
5. Purpose of location, such as defense, leisure, or learning.

Use Stage Bosses

Make dungeons fun by ending levels with a tough encounter that involves an interesting foe. This foe is often the leader of the level's denizens, but it doesn't have to be. As with themes, encountering a boss lets the PCs know they're making progress. In addition, these encounters are inherently thrilling and full of drama. It's up to you how dangerous you want to make each challenge. Tough and depleting battles are dramatic but will also slow the pace to accommodate group recovery needs. Fast and easy encounters are less thrilling but allow for a more exciting pace. Once you know who or what the stage boss is, you can start planting clues about him throughout the level or plan a few short encounters with it before the big showdown to increase player anticipation and game tension. Flesh out the boss's personality and determine whether or not it moves about the dungeon. A wandering boss can tease, waylay, and delay the players so they build up a good deal of animosity toward it. A sedentary boss gives you an opportunity to customize its lair and plan some good location-based strategies and tactics for a memorable finale.

MONSTER MANAGEMENT

Entertaining adventures require entertaining opponents. Good stories and memorable sessions hinge on challenging conflicts, so consider the following tips for customizing foes to your adventure's themes and players' tastes.

Apply Templates and Classes

Players love surprises, and advancing standard foes is a great way to catch your group off-guard. The rules for adding classes and templates in the *Monster Manual* allow you to transform monsters quickly and easily. A good technique is to pick one template or class, such as celestial or rogue, and apply it to several foes in your dungeon. This keeps the learning curve manageable and helps you master one tweak at a time. Work the reason why several dungeon residents share this trait into your design to tighten up the story and make your dungeon more interesting and believable.

Celebrate Monster Special Abilities

Check out the special abilities of your dungeon's denizens. How would the use of these powers in various conflicts over time alter the place and the other residents? Such evidence makes excellent clues and dramatic warnings for the PCs. In addition, they are subtle finishing touches that add depth to your design. It's also fun to imagine how foes' special abilities would manifest during encounters. Liven up combats and celebrate the wondrous and strange powers the characters must confront with vivid descriptions and interesting side effects.

Give Monsters Goals

Create clear monster objectives before the encounter so that battles don't devolve into pointless blow-by-blows. Not every battle needs to be to the death, and unexpected monster actions will wake up the PCs and keep the players guessing. "Why are those creatures defending that plain wall? "Why aren't they attacking back? "Why are they stalling?" Foes who manage to run away are always fun as well, especially if they reappear bearing new scars or swiftly return.

Use One-Shot Magic

One-shot magic items give monsters unexpected and interesting new powers without upsetting game balance. Potions make great, entertaining twists as invisible, flying, or enlarged opponents are always fun to battle. Scrolls can also be used to transform foes or the encounter location in completely unexpected ways. Also, few things can strike fear into PCs like seeing their own tricks used against them, such as having an enemy drink a healing potion mid-combat.

MAKE COMBAT FAST AND INTERESTING

Making combats fast and interesting is a guaranteed path to an exciting adventure. Not only do speedy combats quicken the pace and player pulses, but they also take up less session time so more story can be told. Following are some ways to speed up combats and make them more exciting.

Manage Initiative

Accurate and smooth tracking of who goes when not only keeps things fair and consistent but provides a fluid combat experience. Having multiple enemy combatants can already take up a lot of time, and

calculating initiative for each slows down combat even more. By rolling initiative only once for all the PCs' opponents, combat speed can be considerably increased. Another option is to let a player organize the group's order so you can focus on their foes' initiative. Tracking rounds and initiative with a cribbage board or initiative cards is also handy.

Create Common Statistics

Reduce the number of rules references and unique calculation requirements every round by using themed foes, a limited set of monster templates and class additions, and a common set of weapons and equipment. Also, remember to calculate beneficial, statistic-affecting special abilities or spell effects that foes have used before entering combat.

Manage Encounter Levels

Every encounter doesn't need to be mortally dangerous. Easy battles can work wonders. Players love the thrill of victory and will enjoy the feelings of success and rapid progress. Just make sure that you don't add needless encounters to compensate for their shorter duration, defeating the purpose and bogging down the game in another way.

Especially at low levels, small, quick combats can help a group master the game and their characters' abilities. DMs can also learn through such trial and error without jeopardizing character lives in unintentionally unbalanced conflicts.

Design Combats Well

Consider how you can tailor encounters during the design stage to speed up combat. The number of combatants you queue up is one big factor. Fewer opponents mean fewer calculations, player choices, and variables. It also reduces the amount of information you need to manage. Predetermine opponent positioning. Have creatures' Listen and Spot checks rolled ahead of time, so you know what the DCs for player characters' Hide and Move Silently checks are. Roll initiative ahead of time. Taking care of any factor you can before play will speed up how much time there is to play in a session and how fast everybody gets into the action. D

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The Play's the Thing

THE TEAMWORK POOL
ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

by Mike Mearls

Teamwork is a fundamental part of the D&D game. The fighter keeps an ogre busy while the rogue slips behind it to deliver a sneak attack. The wizard and sorcerer weave mighty spells to strike a dozen foes at a time, but without a paladin or barbarian to hold off the enemy, they'd quickly fall in battle. Every character class has a distinct role that contributes to the entire group's success, yet each class also depends on the others to make up for its deficiencies. This article explores the concept of teamwork, offering rules for transforming your party into something more than a loose collection of individuals. Under the guidance of a strong leader, a disparate band of adventurers can come together to form a team that is more effective than the sum of its parts.

The basic concept behind these rules is that as a group works together, its members learn to better complement each other's talents. Two fighters who have known each other for years can fight much more effectively as a team than a pair that has been together for a few hours. Under the direction of a charismatic leader, a party of adventurers can develop their skills together and form a potent team.

THE TEAMWORK POOL

Besides merely agreeing to work for the same goals and limit party bickering there can be significant benefits to refining an adventuring party into a disciplined squad of loyal teammates. The Inspiring Leader feat is just one such way to take your group from rag-tag to respectable.

Inspiring Leader [General]

You have a natural talent for leadership. Those around you naturally look to you for guidance. Under your direction, your friends better complement each other's actions and form a tight bond.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Leadership, character level 6th.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership score for purposes of the Leadership feat (see page 106 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). You can also establish a teamwork pool.

A teamwork pool is a collection of abilities and skill points you and your allies build as they gain levels. The pool represents the time and effort you and your allies put into learning to work together as a team. Each time someone in your party gains a level, he may contribute up to 2 of his newly gained skill points to the pool rather than spending them on new skill ranks. When the pool contains enough points, you can spend them to purchase teamwork abilities (which must be agreed upon by all the members currently participating in the pool).

Your teamwork pool can affect and be contributed to by a number of allied characters equal to 4 + your Charisma modifier. You always count toward this limit, but you are allowed to choose who is included in the teamwork pool. All of the participants must have worked together for at least one week prior to being added to the pool. Abilities purchased with a teamwork pool's points apply only to those characters currently participating in the pool. Characters who participate in the teamwork pool gain its benefits even when you are not there to lead them. You can only create and participate in one teamwork pool at a time, but you may choose to dissolve a teamwork pool whenever you wish. Other members of the teamwork pool cannot form or join another teamwork pool until they leave your pool.

A pool you create can provide one ability for every two character levels you have.

If you voluntarily dissolve your teamwork pool, all unspent skill points it contained are lost, and participating characters lose all the abilities the pool granted them. However, you and all the characters formerly participating in the skill pool are now free to create or join new teamwork pools. If a character participating in a teamwork pool voluntarily leaves or is prevented from participating (such as by death) they no longer gain any abilities from the pool or count against its

total members, but the character may join another teamwork pool. As long as he is not the leader, a single member leaving a teamwork pool does not affect the other characters. If the leader wishes, a new character who has journeyed with the party for at least a week may be added to a teamwork pool with less than its maximum number of members. This new character gains the full benefits of all the skill pool's purchased abilities. Only one new member can be added to a teamwork pool per week.

In addition to player characters, a pool can include NPCs who have an exceptionally close bond with the party. Animal companions, familiars, and cohorts gained via the Leadership feat may all be included in a teamwork pool. These NPCs all count toward the maximum number of characters who may be attached to a single pool, although only those who gain character levels may contribute skill points to the pool.

Animal companions, familiars, cohorts, and player characters may all participate in a teamwork pool.

TEAMWORK ABILITIES

To purchase an ability you must spend skill points from your teamwork pool. Once points are donated to the pool, they are permanently spent. You cannot place points into the pool and then later decide to reclaim them before they are used.

Bonds of Friendship

Cost: 8 points

You and your allies have a tight friendship that has flourished over the adventures you've shared. Each time a member of your teamwork pool is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, all other members of the pool gain a +2 morale bonus on attacks and Will saves for the rest of the encounter. You do not gain this benefit if a member of the teamwork pool caused the damage that reduced a member to 0 or fewer hit points.

Coordinated Actions

Cost: 8 points

Your group is so familiar with each member's moods and actions that when one member detects danger, the others intuitively react. Before rolling for initiative, one member of the teamwork pool may volunteer to suffer a penalty on initiative to grant other members bonuses. For every -2 penalty one member suffers, to a maximum of -8, he may grant another member of the pool a +1 bonus. These bonuses can be spread around the group or granted to a single character. Only characters who are rolling for initiative may accept the penalty or bonus.

Esprit de Corps

Cost: 8 points

The members of your group trust each other with their lives. As long as a member of your teamwork pool can see a fellow member, he gains a +2 bonus on Will saves against fear effects.

Improved Cooperation

Cost: 8 points

After many weeks and months together, you and your friends have learned to coordinate your actions when working closely together. When members of your teamwork pool work together on a skill check, they operate more efficiently. If a member of a teamwork pool makes a skill check to aid another member's check, she grants him a +3 circumstance bonus to his result on a successful check, instead of a +2 bonus.

Improved Aid Another

Cost: 16 points

The many battles you and your friends have survived have taught you how best to complement each other's skills. When using the aid another special attack action, a member of your teamwork pool can grant a fellow member a +3 bonus to hit or a +3 bonus to AC against the target of his action, instead of a +2 bonus.

Pack Tactics

Cost: 16 points

Your group has learned to coordinate its attacks when flanking an opponent. When two or more members of the teamwork pool flank an enemy, they gain a +3 bonus to hit instead of +2.

Reputation

Cost: 8 points

Your fellowship's great deeds and adventures have earned you a measure of fame. When you present yourselves as a group, word of your accomplishments and the confidence you derive from each other impress the people you meet. When all the members of a teamwork pool are together, they gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks. Your group may purchase this ability more than once, gaining an additional +2 bonus each time.

Team Practice

Cost: 24 points

By practicing together, your group's members pick up techniques and abilities from each other. Once per day, a member of your teamwork pool may gain the benefits of any one feat another character in the pool possesses for one round. You must possess the feat's prerequisites as normal in order to use it.

Warning Shout

Cost: 12 points

After facing many dangers together, your group develops a deep sense of trust among its members. If your friend shouts a warning, you react to it without

consciously thinking about your actions. Once per day, a member of your teamwork pool may forgo his initiative roll in order to allow another member of the pool who would otherwise be surprised to roll for initiative. Whomever surrenders his roll is considered surprised as normal.

ROLEPLAYING THE TEAMWORK POOL

Creating a teamwork pool involves more than simply spending skill ranks and picking team abilities. Creating a pool indicates that you and your allies have developed a close bond that runs deeper than the ties between the typical adventuring party. In the face of terrible danger and hordes of enemies, you stood tall and emerged victorious by relying on your friends. Your party should develop a few roleplaying traits and a background to reflect this tight bond.

A title or name helps establish your identity and creates a theme that unites the group together. The name can come from your adventures, perhaps highlighting a powerful foe you defeated or an important issue you resolved. For example, a band of adventurers who overthrew a tyrant notorious for invading his neighbors could be known as the Peacemakers.

A sigil or sign, perhaps relating to your group's name, gives you a recognizable mark you can use in creating your own heraldry, flags, and other markers. If you collect and paint miniatures, you could even design a symbol simple enough to paint on your figures' shields, chest plates, and robes. Over time, you can add to your sign as you defeat new villains and commit heroic deeds. After defending a borderland castle against a band of ogres, for example, you could add a tower to your symbol to mark your victory.

Your characters should act in ways that are appropriate to the teamwork abilities you select. If your fighter spends an hour a day teaching the group's rogue how to handle a sword, Team Practice is a good selection. Consider the group's relationships when deciding on your abilities. They should reflect each other, not simply exist in a vacuum.

Teamwork Pools and Party Leaders

Those with high Charisma benefit most from the Leadership and Inspiring Leader feats. This makes them natural leaders for NPCs, but not necessarily the best leaders for a band of adventurers.

As a corporation has a number of company officers who head certain departments, so too do adventuring groups rely on the individual members for their strengths. The party's cleric or bard might have the highest Charisma, and therefore the highest Leadership score. Such a character might not lead the party however, and instead concentrate his leadership skills on NPCs. The character either might not be able to inspire his friends and peers (the other PCs), making him a poor party leader, or he might simply decline the job so he can focus his attention on his hirelings or cohort.

What this means is simply that the PC who controls a teamwork pool might not be recognized as the party's leader. Instead, he is someone who spent a feat on improving the party overall. For the sake of fairness, this character probably shouldn't also be expected to put as many skill points into the pool as his colleagues.

DUNGEON MASTERING A TEAMWORK POOL

As DM, you should ensure that the choices the players make with this system are reflected in how NPCs react to them. If one character makes an enemy, he likely creates an enemy for all his friends. The PCs' reputations should be linked together, with actions one member commits reflecting on the rest of the party. Even if the PCs make no special roleplaying considerations for their group, such as creating a group name or symbol, their close relationship and the ease with which they work together are obvious to anyone who meets them. You can have a lot of fun with this relationship and introduce some interesting roleplaying situations. A paladin might find his superiors grilling him about his close relationship with the party's cleric or druid if they follow different gods. A rogue might discover that the local fences are afraid to work with him because he so closely associates with a well-known vigilante monk. Don't overdo it, though. The players shouldn't feel penalized for using these rules, but they should see it reflected in how people react to them.

The PCs' reputations should be linked together, with one member's actions reflecting on the rest of the group.

Of course, the best use for these rules is to turn them against the PCs. When creating a villain, give him the Inspiring Leader feat and have him and his cronies spend skill ranks developing teamwork abilities. Pack Tactics can make an already deadly gang of rogues much stronger in combat, while Warning Shout can pop an unpleasant surprise on the characters. Remember to be logical when deciding which villains have these skills, though. A band of chaotic evil creatures are unlikely to work in concert, and it's doubtful slaves will risk sacrificing themselves to aid a cruel master. However, devoted thieves, warriors of a zealous religion, or magically dominated servants could all reasonably make use of a teamwork pool.

Dungeoncraft

CHARACTERIZATION, PART 1
BRING YOUR CHARACTERS TO LIFE

by Monte Cook

Memorable nonplayer characters distinguish a great campaign or game session from an average one. From the orc leader to the bartender, the arch villain to the guy the PCs ask for directions, good NPCs stick with the players both as an entertaining subject to talk about out of game ("Remember when we talked to that blind beggar and she turned out to be a powerful knight under a spell? I never saw that one coming.") and in-game ("Oh, I remember this guy. He's the one who knew where the dark elf was hiding. I ask him if he ever found that scroll he was looking for.").

A memorable NPC isn't just entertaining, he or she should help the players remember past events in the game that you can use to help them feel more like a part of the campaign world. If the players remember an NPC on their own and use that knowledge later on, they're interacting with the world as though it is a real place. More generally, good NPCs create a feeling of verisimilitude in the game world. Characters that seem more like real people with real goals, likes and dislikes, unique speech patterns, and so on are going to make the world they live in seem more real as well.

Dungeon Masters can use some of the same guidelines and advice given to fiction writers to create their characters. Just as a fiction writer struggles to create believable, interesting characters that invoke an emotional response, so do DMs. DMs want to create villains that the players hate, heroes they respect, and innocents they care about. They might even want to create characters the PCs genuinely want to befriend or fall in love with. These are difficult things to pull off. In a way, it's the deepest secret of dungeon mastering—creating aspects in the game that evoke emotions in real people sitting around the table. Books, movies, and television can make people laugh or cry, and they can make people angry or warm their hearts. Roleplaying games can achieve the same thing.

This is a big step beyond filling a dungeon with monsters for the next dungeon crawl or preparing the stats for the dragon that the PCs have to face. It's got little to do with ability scores or attack bonuses. If you and your players are ready for more than that, well developed characters offer your first step to creating a more vivid and rich roleplaying experience.

NPCS ARE PEOPLE TOO

An important skill in being a good DM, just like in being a good writer, is the ability to observe what you see from a detached point of view. When you sit around talking to your friends, notice not just what they say, but how they say it. Then take it a step further and ask yourself why they are saying it.

When you walk down the street or watch television, note all the types of people you see and what allows you to tell one apart from the other—the specific physical differences like cheekbones, eyes, hairline, and so forth.

The more you understand about real people, the more vividly you can portray your NPCs. This is true whether you are trying to create a specific speech pattern for an NPC, to decide what the character would do in a specific situation, or just simply to describe him or her.

ASSIGNING TRAITS

Of course, in some ways, being a DM is very different from being a writer. You don't focus on the main characters—that's the player's job. However, it's likely that, in the course of a campaign, you'll end up creating far more characters than a writer does in a novel. You are creating a whole world of people.

That daunting task makes it very difficult to make each NPC a fully fleshed-out character with all the depth of a real person. In fact, it's foolish to even think that such a thing would be possible.

So you need a shortcut. The simplest way to create a memorable NPC is to assign each character two specific and unique traits. Two is enough to make the NPC distinctive, and it's few enough so that the NPC is fairly easy to describe and play. Best of all, it doesn't require a lot of preparation ahead of time. You can even come up with the traits on the fly if need be.

Traits can be related to physical appearance, clothing, speech patterns, mannerisms, goals, fears, likes and dislikes, or practically any other personal quality you can imagine.

PHYSICAL TRAITS

Imagine, for example, that the PCs walk into a tavern. You tell them that there is a mysterious looking guy sitting alone in the corner (an old cliché, to be sure). Frankly, they might not be that interested. Instead, imagine if they walk into a tavern and you describe a tall but thin man with a scar on his neck that runs up to his disfigured ear. He has a long nose and narrow eyes beneath a thick eyebrow that runs over both of them in a single, dark stroke. He is clean shaven and his bald head reflects the lantern light on the table, as does the knife he has thrust into the tabletop. With a detailed physical description, he's become far more intriguing. Further, the players are likely to remember "the bald guy with the scarred ear" much more than they are likely to remember "the mysterious guy" if he shows up again.

> The Tenth Rule of Dungeoncraft: Give NPCs two specific and unique traits that distinguish them.

Physical traits are the simplest to create, and they can often be the most memorable. You need do nothing but look around you, watch a little television, or flip through a magazine to see that the variations on physical appearance are limitless.

When describing an NPC, don't just stick to the basics like height and weight. Being tall isn't going to make an NPC memorable. Give the general description, but focus on smaller details to differentiate your characters. Consider traits like those listed on page 128 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Physical traits don't need to be remarkable. They are instead simply touchstones to remember an NPC by. Even "plain" people can be described. What makes the person plain? A flat face? Small eyes and mouth? Any detail you give helps the players form a mental picture in their heads. Once you've created the person in their imaginations, he or she becomes more real.

Don't be afraid to allow your NPCs to be unattractive. Scars, deformities, or shortcomings can be distinctive. Not every villain need be devilishly handsome, and not every paladin need be as beautiful as the heavens.

Of course, the introduction of nonhuman races makes giving physical traits both simpler and more difficult. It's simpler because they offer even greater variation in appearance and because we're given guidelines of how the members of the various races look (elves have pointed ears, halflings are small, and so on). These same things make assigning physical traits to NPCs more difficult. What's the difference between a half-orc and a really ugly human? A short, stocky human with a beard and a dwarf? Are there differences? Ultimately, that's up to you, but it's something to keep in mind.

The pre-ordained appearance of the nonhuman races also limits the range of deviation. While you can imagine a slight human as well as a hulking brute of a human, it's difficult to imagine the same gamut for an elf. Unless you're willing to simply toss out the notions of what D&D races look like, you need to learn to operate within those parameters but still offer a lot of deviation. Thus, you can still have a tall dwarf, but she'll be tall for a dwarf—still shorter than most humans. Some ideas for varying appearance of the various races might include:

Elves/Half-Elves: Generally speaking, all elves are fair and attractive (by human standards), so don't use that fact to distinguish them. Use hair color, style, and length for good effect. Elves can have any color naturally occurring among humans as well as silver, violet, or even gold. An elf might have two colors to his hair. He might wear it long and flowing, in braids on the side but short in the back, braids in the back and loose on the sides, and so on.

Dwarves: Use beards and the often craggy faces of dwarves to distinguish them. Dwarven beards can be long, short, wild, or braided. They might even have objects (beads, gems, briars, and so on) woven into their beards. When describing a dwarf, he can have a large, wide nose or a narrow, truncated one. His eyes can bulge or be deep-set.

Gnomes: Like dwarves, gnomes can be distinguished by their faces rather than by their size and shape. Gnome noses are sometimes prominent, and gnomes can have facial hair or not. Facial hair for a gnome might be a beard, heavy sideburns, or a mustache. One might have wide, sparkling eyes, while another might have bad teeth.

Halflings: Halflings are surprisingly easy to draw distinctions between because they're just like humans

but smaller. Focusing on their faces often inspires the best descriptions, whether they have long hair or short, narrow faces or round, or have smooth or rough complexions.

Half-Orcs: Since they're all—by human standards—ugly, that's usually not worth mentioning. Instead, draw upon the things that they might have intentionally or inadvertently done to themselves—scars, a missing eye or finger, tattoos, piercings, hair braids, a shaved head, and so on. A half-orc can also be given a single, particularly non-human trait to distinguish him or her, such as especially large ears, a long snaggletooth, a protruding lower jaw, a prominent brow, and so on.

CLOTHING

Obviously, clothing is closely related to physical description. Look at fantasy art or historical sources to get ideas for distinctive clothing for your NPCs to wear. "A shirt and pants" can be boring—it's usually not worth mentioning, in fact—and "he's dressed like a cleric" is an equally unsatisfying shortcut. Do some reading and learn what a doublet is, how a priest's stole looks, or what breeches are. Give your NPC a distinctive trim to his vest or a hat. Have a character wear her family crest on her jacket, or have her keep her daggers in bandoliers draped across her chest rather than in sheaths on her belt. Jewelry, like a fancy ring or a unique amulet, can also be a good tool to distinguish one character from another. Sometimes the presence of jewelry—particularly showy pieces or in large amounts—is enough to count as a meaningful trait.

Clothing, as a way of fleshing out an NPC, has a major drawback: People change their clothes. Often, it's better for the players to get the idea of the style of dress (flamboyant, utilitarian, crude, revealing, ill-kept, and so on) than specific clothing items.

SPEECH

This is a tricky one. Some DMs are simply better at "doing voices" than others. If you can, use your voice to portray characters with high-pitched, squeaky voices or low, resonant ones. Assign strange accents (don't be afraid to just steal real-world accents) to various NPCs, often remembering that NPCs from one area, culture, or race will share very similar accents. Give a character a lisp, a stuttering problem, or a very affected and formal manner. Make one talk far too fast, almost so that he can't be understood, while another talks so slowly that it can become frustrating for those conversing with him. A certain character might talk too loud all the time, while another might be very soft-spoken. An NPC who whispers all the time might have a paranoid or conspiratorial outlook, or she might just have damaged vocal chords.

If you're really talented or ambitious, you can try to create your own unique accents. One way to accomplish this is to take a certain sound and replace it with another sound when that NPC speaks. A "d" sound might become a "t" sound, or a "m" sound might always sound like an "n." Alternatively, you might make certain sounds impossible for a character to make. A character might not ever pronounce the letter "r" in words, or he might drop any consonant that comes at the end of a word.

Even if you can't "do voices," you can still use an NPC's speech patterns to distinguish him or her. Word choice is the key. Some characters might speak very formally, without contractions, always pronouncing each word carefully. Others might not express themselves well at all, always forgetting words, using words incorrectly, or just being extremely taciturn.

NEW PHYSICAL TRAITS

The following new traits can be used with the list of traits presented on page 128 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

1. Pockmarked skin
2. Clear complexion
3. Large tumor on head or body
4. Albino
5. One limb longer than the other
6. Bow-legged
7. Clubfoot
8. Multiple facial piercings
9. Small face
10. Cleft lip
11. Thin lips
12. Large mouth
13. No teeth
14. Squints
15. Two different eye colors
16. Heavy eye ridges
17. Missing ear or eye
18. Pinched cheeks
19. Heavy jowls
20. One side of face sags/is paralyzed

USE THESE SUGGESTIONS FOR ALL NPCS

Don't forget that monsters are NPCs too. These suggestions, and those to follow in the next installment, can be applied to monsters as well. A bugbear chief with a limp and an eye-patch or a dragon that slurs all of its words together will be more memorable than a standard-issue, straight-from-the-*Monster Manual* encounter. Giving traits to a nonhuman foe reminds the players that even the monsters are actual, living inhabitants of the world and are all individuals. They are far more than just a collection of game stats. Even if the PCs never learn where the bugbear suffered the wound that causes his limp, it implies a back-story, and sometimes that implication is enough.

Next Installment: Part two of characterization goes beyond the physical and addresses personality traits you can assign to NPCs.

Sage Advice

PUNCH, KICK, SLAM, TRAMPLE! THE SAGE PLAYS ROUGH!

by Skip Williams

This month, the Sage considers the ins and outs of equipment, creatures, and class features. You can email the Sage with your questions at sageadvice@paizo.com.

Exactly how often can a monk attack with a single manufactured weapon when using the flurry of blows ability? For example, if I have a *+1 alchemical silver dagger*, and I'm allowed three attacks in a flurry, how many of those attacks can be dagger attacks? What if I have two daggers? How about with natural weaponry, such as a claw or bite? For example, if I have a vampire monk, can I flurry with a slam attack and drain energy multiple times from one living foe? If natural weaponry doesn't work with a flurry, why not?

You can't use a dagger with a flurry of blows at all. When you use the flurry ability, you must attack with either unarmed strikes or with special monk weapons. There are only six of the latter included in the *Player's Handbook* (kama, nunchaku, quarterstaff, sai, shuriken, and siangham). A natural weapon (any natural weapon) is neither an unarmed strike nor a special monk weapon, so you can't use it along with a flurry.

If you have one or two special monk weapons, you can freely substitute attacks with those weapons with unarmed attacks in the flurry (see the flurry of blows description on page 46 of the *Player's Handbook*). If you're allowed three attacks in a flurry, and you have a *+1 alchemical silver sai* (or other special monk weapon), you could use the sai up to three times in the flurry. The examples given in the flurry of blows entry don't make that completely clear because they don't cover all the combinations of weapon attacks and unarmed strikes that are possible.

If you have two special monk weapons to use, you can use either or both of them in the flurry. For example, if you're entitled to three attacks using flurry of blows, and you're armed with a *+1 alchemical silver sai* and a cold iron sai, you can make three attacks with one sai and no attacks with the other, two attacks with one sai and one attack with the other, one attack with each sai and one unarmed attack, or any other combination of three attacks. Note that having a sai in each hand won't prevent a monk from making unarmed attacks. A monk with her hands full can still make her full complement of unarmed strikes (see the unarmed strike entry on page 41 of the *Player's Handbook*).

It might seem a tad strange that you cannot use a natural weapon, such as a slam or a claw, when you can use a monk weapon such as a sai or a kama. As the Sage pointed out back in issue #283, however, natural weaponry isn't as handy as manufactured weaponry. You never get extra attacks from a high base attack bonus with natural weaponry, and the monk's flurry ability is another way to get extra attacks from your base attack bonus. It's worth noting here that a vampire monk using its unarmed strike ability is not using its slam attack and cannot drain energy.

The description of the flurry of blows ability says there's no such thing as a monk attacking with an off-hand weapon during a flurry of blows. What does that mean, exactly? Can the monk make off-hand attacks in addition to flurry attacks?

Actually, the text to which you refer appears in the entry for unarmed strikes. When a monk uses his unarmed strike ability, he does not suffer any penalty for an off-hand attack, even when he has his hands full and is attacking with knees and elbows, using the flurry of blows ability to make extra attacks, or both.

The rules don't come right out and say that a monk can't use an unarmed strike for an off-hand attack (although the exact wording of the unarmed strike ability suggests otherwise), and no compelling reason why a monk could not do so exists. When using an unarmed strike as an off-hand attack, the monk suf-

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fers all the usual attack penalties from two-weapon fighting (see Table 8–10 in the *Player's Handbook*) and the monk adds only half his Strength bonus (if any) to damage if the off-hand unarmed strike hits.

To add an off-hand attack to a flurry of blows, stack whatever two-weapon penalty the monk has with the penalty (if any) from the flurry. Attacks from the flurry have the monk's full damage bonus from Strength, but the off-hand attack gains only half Strength bonus to damage. If the off-hand attack is a weapon, that weapon isn't available for use in the flurry (if it can be used in a flurry at all, see the previous question). For example, a 4th-level monk with the Two-Weapon Fighting feat and a Strength score of 14 decides to use a flurry of blows and to throw in an off-hand attack as well. The monk has a base attack bonus of +3 and +2 Strength bonus. With a flurry, the character can make two attacks, each at +3 (base +3, -2 flurry, +2 Strength). An unarmed strike is a light weapon, so the monk suffers an additional -2 penalty for both the flurry and the off-hand attack, and the monk makes three attacks, each at an attack bonus of +1. The two attacks from the flurry are primary attacks and add the monk's full Strength bonus to damage of +2. The single off-hand attack adds half the monk's Strength bonus to damage (+1).

If the monk in our example has two sais to use with the flurry, plus the off-hand attack, he can use both in the flurry (in which case he must make the off-hand attack with an unarmed strike) or one sai for the off-hand attack and one with the flurry. The sai used in the off-hand attack is not available for the flurry and vice versa.

One of the reasons the 5-foot-step exists is to allow a safe approach to foes that outreach you.

The rules for targeted spells say you have to be able to see your target. Does this mean that you can use a mirror to look around a corner and fire such a spell at a target you see in a mirror? For example, can you use a mirror to shoot a *magic missile* around a corner at your target?

No. First, you must see (or touch) your target to use a targeted spell. Seeing an image of your target doesn't suffice.

Second, you must have line of effect to your target (that's true for just about every spell), and you don't have line of effect through (or around) a corner. If you want to aim a targeted spell around a

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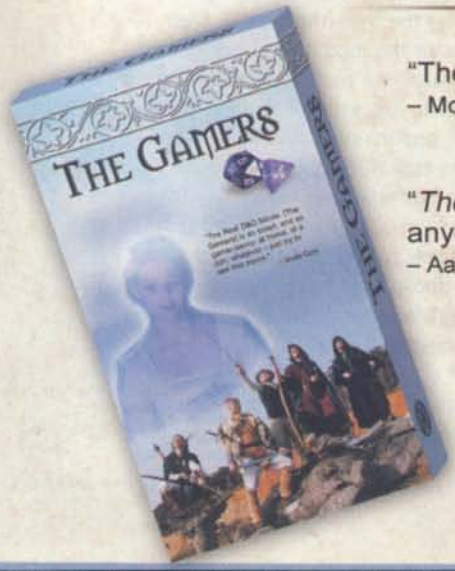

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corner, you'll have to peek around the corner at least a little bit. You still can claim cover from the corner, however.

I have a bard in my game who has a bit of money to spend. She buys a set of *+3 bracers of armor* and a suit of *+3 leather armor*. If the bard wears both at the same time, the armor bonus from the bracers (+3) overrides the armor bonus from the leather armor (+1). Our question is, does the +3 enhancement bonus from the armor still get applied for a total of +6, is it subsumed by the magic of the bracers, or is it just ignored completely? Since the enhancement bonus and armor bonus are different types of bonuses, the bard thinks her total Armor Class bonus should be +6.

The magic leather armor's +3 enhancement bonus applies to make the armor's armor bonus bigger (+4 in this case). The example character uses only the larger armor bonus (+4) when wearing both the armor and the bracers.

The overlapping +3 bonus from the bracers is still there however (just irrelevant most of the time). If something bypasses the +4 bonus from the magic armor, the bracers might still prove effective. For example, an incorporeal touch attack bypasses the whole armor bonus from the magic armor. Since the bracers provide a force effect, they protect the bard against the incorporeal touch attack. The example character still has a +3 armor bonus against the incorporeal touch attack.

Will a reach weapon (or natural reach) allow you to make an attack of opportunity against a foe using the Spring Attack or Ride-By Attack feats against you? Don't you always get an attack of opportunity against a foe that moves in to make a melee attack against you when you have greater reach than that foe? What about a 5-foot step? If you have greater reach than your foe, won't you get an attack of opportunity against a foe that uses a 5-foot step to get close enough to attack you?

Having superior reach allows a creature to threaten more squares, but it doesn't allow that creature to make attacks of opportunity when it otherwise could not.

When you use either Spring Attack or Ride-By Attack, your movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity from the foe you attack using the feat (the benefit from Ride-By Attack also extends to the mount). Indeed, one of the main purposes of both of these feats is to allow you to close with foes that outreach you without getting smacked with an attack of opportunity. Remember, however, that neither feat prevents attacks of opportunity from creatures that you're not attacking.

A 5-foot step provokes no attack of opportunity from anyone if that step is your only movement for the round, no matter how much reach those foes have. Again, one of the reasons the 5-foot step rule exists is to allow a slow, safe approach to foes that outreach you.

If you have the Trample feat, and you perform a mounted overrun, your target cannot choose to avoid you, and if

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you knock your opponent prone with the overrun, your mount can make one hoof attack against your opponent. Suppose you're mounted on something other than a horse. Should the mount get one attack with its primary natural weapon (a hoof attack is the horse's primary attack), or does a creature without a hoof attack get no free attack to attack against the trampled and prone opponent?

The free attack for the mount in a trample represents the mount literally knocking down the foe and stepping on him as he falls underneath the mount's churning feet. The feat description specifies a hoof attack, but the kind of natural weapon is not limited only to hoof attacks. Any attack that's delivered with a foot, such as a claw or slam attack, also works. If the quadruped mount has natural weaponry on all four feet, use the weapon on the front feet (for example if your mount is a big cat, use the claw attack for a trample, not the rake). Mounts that don't attack with their feet don't get the free attack. For example, if your mount is a riding dog, it won't get a free attack from a trample; it can't use its bite, and it has no natural weaponry on its front feet.

If you are playing a monstrous character with four arms, can you wear a magic ring on each hand, or are you still limited to two rings?

It's two rings per character, number of hands not withstanding. Magic item locations aren't just about where items fit on the body, they also relate to how magic flows through the body.

What are the rules for mounted charges? Do characters on mounts only need a 10-foot straight path when charging? Or do they need more room?

The rules for mounted charges are the same as for other charges. You must move before your attack, not after, and you must move at least 10 feet (2 squares) on your mount and may move up to double your mount's speed directly toward the designated opponent. This applies no matter how big you or your mount is. A riding dog and an elephant both need 10 feet of movement to perform a charge.

When you make a mounted charge, must you stop once you are in melee range of your target? Or do you continue past the opponent?

If you don't have the Ride-By Attack feat, your movement for the turn you perform a charge ends when you attack. You must make the attack as soon you can. D

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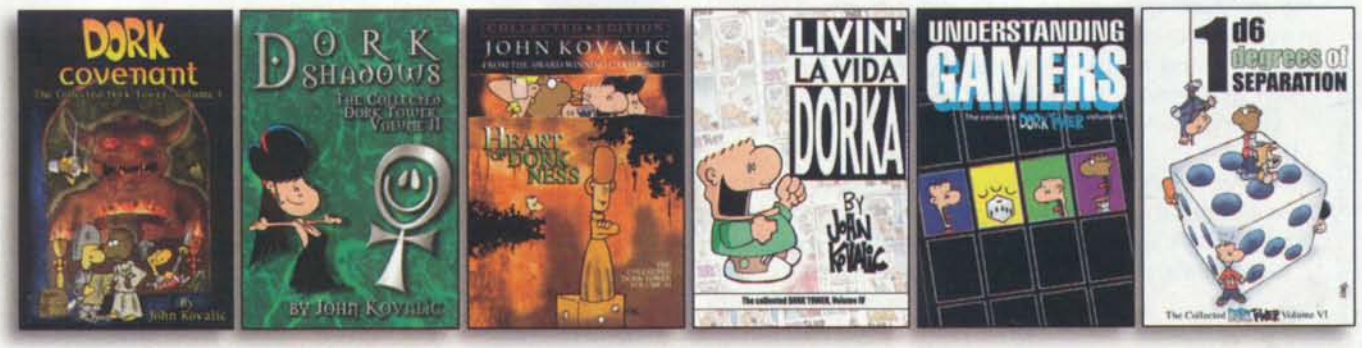

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The man who misses an anniversary catches it later.

TODAY IS A VERY SPECIAL OCCASION!
GUMDROP APPRECIATION DAY?
NOT QUITE, PIFFANY...
IT'S THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS!
I MUST HAVE A DIFFERENT CALENDAR THAN YOU GUYS.
THIS PHENOMENON HAD VERY HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...
FOR ONE, CHARACTER TRAITS WEREN'T VERY DEEP. THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ALMOST ALWAYS MALE IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.
RESUME: FIGHTER
TURN OFFS: THINKING, NEGOTIATION
RESUME: MAGIC-USER TURN-ONS: POWER. TURNING PEOPLE INTO FROGS. POWER
RESUME: CLERIC
PURPOSE: PUTTING THE PARTY BACK TOGETHER AFTER THEY DO SOMETHING STUPID.
RESUME: THIEF. HOBBIES: STEALING. BACKSTABBING. NOT SETTING OFF TRAPS
THANKFULLY, WE'VE MOVED BEYOND THOSE STEREOTYPES.
INDEED. TODAY, CHARACTERS ARE WELL-ROUNDED AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS ARE MORE COMPLEX.
THEY ARE?
GO WITH THEM ON THIS ONE.
AND ADVENTURES HAVE GONE FAR BEYOND SIMPLE SLAY-IT-FOR-STUFF FESTS.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, WE HAVE TO FINISH OFFING THE KING OF THE LIZARD FOLK AND RETRIEVING THE CROWN OF XAGYG.
HEY, DID WE FIND ANY MAGIC STUFF YET? I'M RUNNING LOW ON THINGS THAT THROW FIRE OR DISINTEGRATE STUFF.
DON'T FORGET TO GO EASY ON THE SWORD-SWINGING AND SPELL-GESTURES, GUYS. I'VE HAD TO REATTACH YOUR ARMS THREE TIMES TODAY.
THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY PLAY THE SAME.